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MONOGRAPH ON
LEONARDO
DA VINCI'S

MONA LISA

by

JOHN R. EYRE

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Photo] [*Paul Laib*

THE ISLEWORTH MONA LISA (GIOCONDA)

Canvas, size 33½ in. by 25½ in.

MONOGRAPH

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JOHN R. EYRE

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PREFACE

THIS Monograph has been written in consequence of the deliberate opinion expressed by a great connoisseur to the effect that the Isleworth *Mona Lisa* can genuinely be ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci. To have undertaken such a task upon the *ipse dixit* of an ordinary expert would have been credulous, if not rash. But it was not so. For it was on the unequivocal opinion of one of the greatest of living judges of the works of the old masters: one who, to my own knowledge, bought at public auction, during the years 1913 and 1914, eight old masterpieces, at nominal prices, most of which, when cleaned, bore initials or signatures, and of which one was a Rubens, that was sold afterwards for eighty times its auction price, through the agency of one of the greatest of European art authorities. Yet all these pictures had passed, *unrecognized*, under the close scrutiny of home and foreign experts of repute, and of dealers the most astute. All this I mention merely in justification of the value which I have placed upon the opinion of an authority whose judgment is thus substantiated. And when this opinion was endorsed by an art critic of Mr. P. G. Konody's standing, I felt convinced there was at least good ground for investigation. True, at the outset it appeared almost hopeless to attempt to shake the tradition of four centuries, which had decreed that the Louvre picture was the one and only version of Leonardo's world-famous portrait. But the closer I investigated the small amount of incontrovertible and contemporaneous evidence we have regarding the painting of the portrait, the plainer and more evident became the invalidity of the tradition and the almost culpable credulity of those writers on Da Vinci, who unhesitatingly accepted this tradition as truth beyond question.

J. R. E.

ISLEWORTH-ON-THAMES,
LONDON, W.
March 17, 1915.

LEONARDO DA VINCI'S

Mona Lisa

THE *Mona Lisa* in the Louvre has been accepted for four centuries as the one, only, and original version of the famous portrait of Madonna Lisa Giocondo painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

It is difficult to break down a tradition of such long standing, yet this is what is claimed to be done in the following pages. But in order to accomplish this, theories and arguments, no matter how strong and plausible they be, count as nothing unless substantiated by facts and direct contemporaneous evidence, and it is on these latter that the *onus probandi* lies. The fact that there are two *Mona Lisas* in existence to-day, both of superlative intrinsic merit, and both the work of Leonardo da Vinci, the one with a record of four centuries behind it, the other which has scarcely been heard of before and has only just emerged from obscurity, creates a Sphinx-like problem not easy to solve. The unknown Isleworth *Mona Lisa* can, however, afford to stand on her own merits and cast her enigmatic smile on those who taunt her with her lack of pedigree. But convinced of the genuineness of the Isleworth painting, and that upon the authority of the soundest of expert knowledge, I determined to solve the riddle. How I have succeeded I leave the reader to judge. As, however, this treatise is complex and discursive, I purpose here to give a short outline of its whole theory.

In 1501 four pictures by Leonardo da Vinci were seen in his studio in Florence. Two of these were the *St. Anne* and the *Madonna with the Spindles;* the other two were portraits, on which his pupils were engaged, as was then the common custom, filling in details, in which he also assisted. The two portraits have never hitherto been identified nor accounted for, and they have been gratuitously assumed to have been lost, why or wherefore no one knows; yet, as I prove, Leonardo himself never lost a single drawing, much less a painting. But at this very time, 1501, it is established, beyond cavil, that Leonardo painted the portrait of Madonna Lisa

to the order of her husband. Hence I maintain that one of the portraits seen was a *Mona Lisa*, since there is not the slightest particle of evidence to the contrary. But what was the second portrait? Vasari tells us, fifty years later, that at this very time Leonardo produced the *St. Anne* and the *Mona Lisa* portrait, as well as the portrait of another lady in Florence, but as it is proved that this lady died thirty years previously, it could not possibly have been her portrait. As Leonardo, however, almost invariably commenced two versions of each of his works, which he rarely finished, I maintain the second portrait seen in 1501 was a second version of the *Mona Lisa*. In 1505 Raphael saw the *Mona Lisa* in Florence, and made, for his own purpose, a study of it which now hangs in the Louvre. The *St. Anne* and a *Mona Lisa* are also to-day in the possession of the Louvre authorities. But this Louvre *Mona Lisa*, I prove conclusively, cannot be the one from which Raphael drew his study, and this shows there must have been another version, which Raphael saw and studied, and it was this version that went unfinished to Madonna Lisa's husband, who had commissioned it from the master. Again at Cloux in France in 1517, some eighteen months before his death, Leonardo showed the Cardinal of Aragon the *St. Anne* and the portrait of a Florentine lady, which he described as painted to the order of Guiliano de' Medici. This portrait is also supposed to have been lost, because of Leonardo's description, but I think I have proved pretty clearly that it could have been none other than the *Mona Lisa* now in the Louvre with the *St. Anne*. Hence, the theory expounded in this monograph is that the two portraits seen in Florence in 1501 were two versions of the *Mona Lisa*, one of which went unfinished in 1505–1506 to the sitter's husband, who had ordered it; the other, unfinished, in company with the *St. Anne*, unfinished, remained on with Leonardo and he took them both to France, where they were finished, at Cloux, and shown to the Cardinal of Aragon. They subsequently were acquired by Francis I, went into his collection, and later still passed on to the Louvre, where they now are. This theory is supported, as will be seen by numerous facts and items of circumstantial evidence that it would be very difficult to rebut.

The Painting now known as the Isleworth *Mona Lisa* was so covered with dirt and varnish that all its intrinsic beauties were completely hidden, and thus it came into the possession of the present owner. It represented but a dark, dismal, uninteresting portrait of Madonna Lisa Giocondo, and it had long been assumed to be a copy, until it was thoroughly cleaned, when it was, at once, revealed as the genuine work of Leonardo da Vinci. It had been in the one family for

considerably over a century, having been purchased in Italy, with other paintings, by an ancestor as an original masterpiece of Leonardo's, and it had hung for a hundred years in his old Manor house in Somerset. The great beauty, the highly artistic and the supreme technical qualities, with the ineffable calm and the golden glow of the Isleworth masterpiece, stamp it at once as the work of the great master, while its age is contemporaneous. It is not, in any way, a copy, even from Leonardo's own studio, for the pose of the head, several minor details, and the whole unfinished background, are different from the accepted version in the Louvre, while the picture itself is larger.

Here I can do no better than quote some extracts from an article in the ' New York Times ' of February 15, 1914, which was written by the well-known impartial art critic and expert, Mr. P. G. Konody, who, expecting to find one of the numerous copies, after a long and close examination of the painting, described it in the following terms :—

> ' An exceptionally interesting version of the *Mona Lisa* has recently turned up at Isleworth, London. Let it be said at once the picture in question has nothing whatever to do with any of the innumerable early or late French copies which have from time to time been boomed into prominence. It is not only vastly superior to all of them, but it is of such superb quality that it more than holds its own when compared with the much-restored and repainted Louvre masterpiece. What is even more significant is that it is in no sense of the word a " copy," but varies in some very important points from the Paris *Mona Lisa.* The design is altogether different. There is far more background; the spacing is infinitely more pleasing; the head is inclined at a different angle; the background is quite different and far less assertive than in the Paris picture; the features are more delicate, and, let it be boldly stated, far more pleasing and beautiful than in the Louvre version.
>
> ' But there are more potent reasons to attach the greatest importance to the new discovery. There is in the collection of the old master drawings at the Louvre an original pen drawing by Raphael, which is reproduced in Müntz's great work on Leonardo, and which is generally admitted to be a memory sketch by Raphael of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa.* Now this memory sketch is framed at both sides by two columns, of which no trace is to be found in the Paris *Mona Lisa.* These columns appear in the identical place in the Isleworth picture and are of immense value to the harmonious balance of the composition. . . . However, no specious

arguments are needed for the Isleworth picture, the quality of which may speak for itself . . . the inimitable soft and lovely painting of the head and bust, the exquisite subtlety of the expression, the golden glow of the general colouring can be due only to Leonardo. The face shows none of the defects of the Louvre picture, which are probably due to clumsy repainting. . . . Needless to say, the acceptance of this work as a picture painted in part at least by Leonardo, does not in any way shake the authenticity of the Louvre *Mona Lisa.* But it is worth noting that the painting of two versions of the same subject would not be an isolated instance in the practice of Leonardo—witness *The Virgin of the Rock*, of which both the Louvre and the National Gallery in London own authentic versions.'

The emergence of this masterpiece from obscurity throws a searching ray of light upon the hitherto somewhat obscure history of Leonardo's great work, and suggests many interesting problems. Now we can in all honesty and sincerity ask: 'Is the Louvre picture Leonardo's first and original portrait of Madonna Lisa Giocondo to the order of her husband, Francesco del Giocondo, or, was more than one version of this portrait issued from Leonardo's studio?' In order to answer this question it will be necessary to review the whole history of the picture from its very inception.

There is very little direct contemporaneous evidence to go upon, but that which we have is extremely valuable. It consists of: (1) Two letters of Fra Nuvolaria written in 1501; (2) the drawing —now in the Louvre—made by Raphael before 1505 from the original picture; (3) the drafts of the two letters written by Leonardo himself in 1511; (4) and the visit paid to Leonardo at Cloux, near Amboise, by the Cardinal of Aragon, which the Cardinal's secretary described in writing, giving fully the conversation that took place.

Then there is the outside evidence deducible from history, and the several lives written of the master—unfortunately not always too reliable—besides the numerous articles and treatises upon the subject. I shall deal with all of these chronologically when practicable, so as to make the record as clear and as plain as possible.

That doubts have already been thrown upon the popular idea that the Louvre *Mona Lisa* is the only version of Leonardo's famous picture, is shown by the following lines from Browning's 'The Ring and the Book':—

> 'Oh! with a Lionard going cheap,
> If it should prove, as promised, that Jaconde
> Whereof a copy contents the Louvre!'

I

It must have been towards the end of 1500,[1] Leonardo returned to Florence from Milan, having *en route* paid a visit at Mantua to Isabella d'Este, Marchesa of Mantua, of whom he did *two* sketches with a view to painting her portrait. One of them he left with her, and the other he kept for himself, and showed it to one of her agents in Venice on March 13, 1500.[2] On hearing that Leonardo had arrived in Florence, the Marchesa wrote on March 22, 1501,[3] to one of her friends in that city, Fra Pietro da Nuvolaria, General of the Order of the Carmelites, about the promised portrait, and his answers to her letters are two of the most important authentic documents we have in connection with the master, both of which I shall give in full:—

> 'I will apply all my care and haste to the commission, but, according to everything I hear, Leonardo's life is full of variety, and subject to many changes. He seems to be living without care for the morrow. He has only done one cartoon since he has been at Florence. His composition is an infant Christ hardly a year old, slipping from His mother's clasp to catch hold of a lamb and embrace it. The Virgin, rising out of the lap of St. Anne, endeavours to part the Babe from the lamb—the animal must not

[1] I am inclined to believe that Leonardo returned to Florence some time in the end of 1500, though his biographers state 1501. He had already transferred his money there in 1499. He was in Mantua before March, 1500, then went on to Venice, where he was in March, 1500. By the beginning of March, 1501, he had nearly finished the *St. Anne* cartoon and the two portraits, which must have taken some months.

[2] 'Leonardo da Vinci is at Venice; he has shown me a picture of your Highness, which is very natural and appears to me as perfect as it can be.' Lorenzo da Pavia, March 13, 1500.

[3] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 111). Dr. Gronau gives this date as March 17th in his short life of Leonardo (p. 33). Dr. E. Solmi, in his Monograph, gives the letter as dated March 27th. Müntz's date (March 22nd) must be correct, as he takes it from M. Yriarte's article in 'La Gazette des Beaux-Arts,' 1888 (vol. 37, p. 123), which was written after perusal of the documents collected by M. Arnaud Baschet.

be sacrificed; it represents the Passion of Christ. St. Anne seems to make some movement to hold her daughter back. This may be an allusion to the Church, which would not seek to prevent the Lord's Passion. The figures are life-sized, and yet the composition is a small one, because as all of them are seated or bending down, they overlap each other on the left hand side of the group. This sketch is not yet completed. He has done nothing else. *Two of his pupils are painting portraits, and he touches them up from time to time.* He grows very impatient of painting, and spends all his time over geometry. I write this merely to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. I will perform the commission and will advise your Excellency.'[1]

The second letter, written no doubt just a week after the above, says:—

'Most Illustrious and most Excellent Lady,—During this Holy Week I have learnt the intentions of Leonardo the painter from his pupil Salai, and from several other of his friends, who, to inform me yet more fully, conducted me to his house on Wednesday in Holy Week. To sum it up, his mathematical studies have so drawn him away from painting, that he cannot endure to use his brush. Nevertheless, I endeavoured first of all skilfully to plead your Excellency's cause. Then, seeing him well inclined to please your Excellency, I spoke to him in all sincerity, and we came to the following conclusion: he can leave the service of the King of France without incurring his displeasure, and as he hopes within a month at latest, he will place himself at your Excellency's orders in preference to that of any other person. But, in any case, no sooner shall he have finished a little picture he is now painting for one, Robertet, the favourite of the King of France, than he will immediately execute the portrait and send it to your Excellency. I have left two good canvassers about him. The small picture on which he is working is a Madonna, seated disentangling her spindles, while the child, with his foot on the basket containing the spindles, has laid hold of the winder, and gazes attentively at its four rays (branches) which form a cross, and as though desiring to have the cross, he

[1] Eugene Müntz, in his able life of Leonardo, quotes this letter (vol. 2, p. 124), but gives the date as April 3, 1501. Moreover, he refers to its 'elegant and faithful' translation by M. Yriarte in the 'Gazette des Beaux Arts' in 1888, but the latter distinctly states it was written six days after the Marchesa's letter of March 22, 1501, so it should bear date March 28, 1501 (new style calendar). M. Yriarte's exact words are: 'Le 22 Mars 1501 la Marquise s'adresse a lui (Fra Nuvolaria). . . . Six jours après Nuvolaria repond à la princesse: je m'occuperai avec soin et celérité de la commission.' 'Gazette des Beaux-Arts' (vol. 37, p. 123).

holds it firmly, though laughingly, and will not give it back to his mother, who tries to take it from him. This is what I have succeeded arranging with him. Florence, April 4, 1502. Fra Pietro da Nuvolaria, Vice-General of the Carmelites.'[1]

Now in these two very explicit letters, written at the time, we have four pictures distinctly specified—the *St. Anne*, two portraits, and the *Madonna with the Spindles*. Let us see if we can trace them.

The *St. Anne* is now in the Louvre, for as Müntz asserts: 'This letter removes all doubt as to the identity of the composition of the picture (*St. Anne*) in the Louvre with that produced by Leonardo in 1501.'[2] Mr. Herbert Cook endorses this, and says: 'Fortunately, the original still hangs in the Salon Carré of the Louvre; for, defaced though it be, and retouched by other hands, there can be no doubt that this is the very picture mentioned in 1517 as on Leonardo's easel and still incomplete.'[3] Other authorities are equally satisfied on the point, so there is no question that the *St. Anne* picture seen by Fra Nuvolaria is now in the Louvre.

The *Madonna with the Spindles* is also accounted for in the letter of the Florentine Ambassador to the French Court—Francesco Pandolfini—dated Blois, June 22, 1507, in which he states that having that day had an interview with the French King, Louis XII, his Majesty wants Leonardo to paint some Madonna pictures for him, and, perhaps, his portrait. 'All this,' adds the Ambassador, 'came from a little painting from his hand that has recently been brought here, and which is judged to be an excellent work.'[4]

[1] Müntz seems to have got hopelessly fogged over these dates. He gives the date of this letter in his text as April, 1503 (vol. 2, p. 120), yet he gives the writer's date at foot of the letter as April 4, 1502, and refers to Calvi's biography of Leonardo, which gives the date as April 4, 1501. Fra Nuvolaria dated it according to the *Old Style*, or Julian, year, which commenced on March 25th, as it did in England until 1752. Calvi's difference in the date of a year is accounted for by his reckoning it according to the *New Style*, or Gregorian Calendar, which commenced the year with January in 1582, but this would not account for Müntz's difference of two years. Richter (p. 63) gives this date as April 4, 1501. It should be noted that March 28th to April 4th is just one week, and that Fra Nuvolaria promised in his first letter to 'apply all care and *haste* to the commission,' which could scarcely apply to a letter two years later, or even a year later. Dr. Georg Gronau also falls into this error when he states: 'Almost exactly a year later the Carmelite could inform Isabella of a visit which he paid to Leonardo on Easter Wednesday, April 4, 1502' (p. 36).

[2] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 124).

[3] 'Burlington Magazine,' December, 1911 (vol. 20, No. 105). Mr. Cook here refers to the visit the Cardinal d'Aragon paid Leonardo at Cloux, near Amboise in 1517, with which I shall deal in due course.

[4] 'We may assume that Pandolfini here alludes to the picture of the *Madonna with the Spindles*, painted by Leonardo for Robertet, the King's Chancellor.' Richter's 'Leonardo,' p. 93.

But the two portraits mentioned by Fra Nuvolaria, what became of them? Müntz declares: 'What they were is unknown.'[1] Surely this seems incredible in the light of Vasari's record, and, though they are supposed to have completely disappeared, I think they are as traceable as is the *Saint Anne*. Let us see what the first great Art historian, Vasari, says about them; but, unfortunately, he is not always quite accurate about details. His description of the *St. Anne* includes features of the Paris Picture, as well as the London Cartoon, showing that his informant had seen both.[2] Then he distinctly states:—

> 'This Cartoon was subsequently taken to France. Leonardo then painted the portrait of Ginevra, the wife of Amerigo Benci, a most beautiful thing, and abandoned the Commission (the *St. Anne*) entrusted to him by the Servite Monks, who once more confided it to Filippino. . . . For Francesco del Giocondo, Leonardo undertook to paint the portrait of Mona Lisa, his wife, but after loitering[3] over it for four years, he finally left it unfinished. This work is now in the possession of King Francis I and is at Fontainebleau.'

This statement, written fifty years later, corroborates Fra Nuvolaria's to the effect that the *St. Anne* and two portraits were painted simultaneously. Yet Vasari could not have seen Fra Nuvolaria's letter.

But here we have the two portraits distinctly specified by Vasari as being—the *Benci* and the *Mona Lisa*—painted at the same time as Leonardo was drawing the cartoon of the *St. Anne;* but he was quite wrong in describing one as that of the wife of Amerigo Benci, since that lady died in 1473, nearly thirty years previously.[4] The second, Vasari states, was the *Mona Lisa*, which

[1] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 124).

[2] Müntz says: 'When Leonardo returned to Milan to reside there, he naturally carried his cartoon—perhaps his two cartoons—with him.' (Vol. 2, p. 125.)

[3] Vasari's 'Lives of the Most Eminent Painters,' etc. (vol. 2, p. 316). Edited by E. H. and E. W. Blashfield and A. A. Hopkins. Vasari's word is 'penatovi,' which Mr. Gaston D. C. de Vere, in the latest edition published this year of Vasari's 'lives,' translates as 'toiling.' Müntz translated it as 'assiduous labour.'

[4] Müntz draws attention to this error in his life of Leonardo (vol. 2, p. 159). That Leonardo did paint a portrait of Ginevra Benci, as Vasari states, may be true. Müntz says: 'Of late years a learned critic of Tuscan Art, Signor Ridolfi, has questioned Vasari's statement upon the following grounds. Ginevra di Amerigo Benci was born in 1457, she married Luigi di Bernardo Niccolini in 1473, and died the same year. Leonardo, then, must have painted her picture before he went to Milan, and not after his return to Florence. He painted her, in fact, as Vasari asserts, while she was still a child, 'quando era una fanciulla e bellissima' (vol. 2, p. 159). De Piles, in his short biographical sketch to his translation of Leonardo's 'Treatise on Painting,' published

was left unfinished. Mr. McCurdy tells us in his life of the master that:—

> 'Fra Pietro da Nuvolaria's letter to Isabella d'Este, April 3, 1501,[1] (?) (March 28, 1501), proves the *St. Anne* cartoon to be the earliest commission since his return to Florence. . . . But about this time he must have commenced the Portrait of *Mona Lisa*. . . . The commission must have been given to him very soon after his arrival in Florence. . . . (p. 47.) The *Mona Lisa* was one of the first commissions after Leonardo's return to Florence; commenced, according to Milanesi and M. Ravaisson-Mollien, in 1500.' (p. 113.)

Dr. Thiis in his able and exhaustive work, which is also the latest, on Leonardo's early years says:—

> 'In 1501 he executed the famous cartoon for the picture of the *Madonna with the St. Anne*, intended for the church of the Annunziata. At about the same time he must have begun the portrait of *Mona Lisa*.'[2]

Thus all these authorities support my theory that the *Mona Lisa* must have been, at least, one of the portraits seen by Fra Nuvolaria.

The error about the Benci portrait was due, no doubt, to the fact that Vasari wanted to account for two portraits that were known to have been painted by Leonardo at that time. But what was the supposed Benci portrait, and what became of it? It is not accounted for in any of the records of Leonardo's life. We have seen that *immediately before* this he had made *two* drawings of Marchesa Isabella d'Este, and I maintain—and I think to any unbiased mind I can prove it—that he acted similarly in this case, and that the wrongly attributed Benci portrait was a second version of the *Mona Lisa*. We must take into consideration all the circumstances surrounding it, and we must not for a second lose sight of the fact

in Paris in 1716, describes it as a portrait of her daughter: 'et celui de la fille d'Americ Bencis c'etoit une jeune enfant, d'une beauté charmants, cette Flore qui a un air si noble et si gracieux, fut achevée en ce temps la, elle est aujourd'hui a Paris.' This is wrong, for the daughter would be twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old in 1501.

[1] This letter, dated April 3 (4), 1501, is Fra Nuvolaria's second letter in which is mentioned the *Madonna with the Spindles*, but not the *St. Anne* cartoon, which is mentioned in the first letter of March 28, 1501 (*New Style*). Müntz gives Yriarte as his authority for this letter at p. 124 of his book, while at page 120 he gives Calvi as his authority, but he gratuitously finds a new date for it as 'April, 1503.' Moreover, Fra Nuvolaria dates his letter April 4th, not 3rd. McCurdy refers to the wrong letter here through Müntz's mistake, no doubt.

[2] 'Leonardo da Vinci, the Florentine years of Leonardo and Verrocchio' (p. 36), by Dr. Jens Thiis, translated by Jessie Muir. London, Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 1913.

that it was Leonardo's usual practice to do *two* representations of every subject he portrayed, either in drawing, in cartoon, or in painting. In his own handwriting, as early as October, 1478, he records: 'I commenced the two of the Virgin Mary.'[1]

We have extant to-day—all unquestioned as to authenticity—the two drawings of Isabella d'Este; two drawings of the *Adoration of the Magi*, and one cartoon; and Müntz admits that Leonardo 'may have treated the same subject twice';[2] two paintings of the *Madonna del Rocce*. We know he did two cartoons of the *St. Anne*, one of which, though differing in detail, now hangs in the Royal Academy. He commenced two versions of *St. John the Baptist* (see p. 38, Note 1); and we are told he did two versions[3] of *Leda and the Swan*, and Herr Müller-Walde emphatically states that he painted one version of the picture in Florence between 1501 and 1506, and a second at Fontainebleau between 1516 and 1519;[4] while M. Rosenberg[5] voices the statement that he made two models of the Sforza Monument. It was almost a principle of Da Vinci's to do two versions of every subject. He even wrote two drafts of some of his letters. Many great authorities hold that he painted the two pictures of the *Annunciation*, the small one in the Louvre (admitted by all) and the larger one in the Uffizi in Florence.[6]

In view of these facts, is it not as good as certain that Leonardo started painting two versions of the *Mona Lisa*, more especially as one of his earliest biographers tells us he liked painting it more than any other picture?[7] There is another reason, moreover, why Leonardo should have painted two versions of Madonna Lisa, namely that he painted her direct on to the canvas. We have not a trace of a single drawing or study by him for the picture, while we have the positive statement of Vasari that 'he always employed, while he was painting her portrait, persons to play or sing and jesters, who might make her remain merry.' We know the amount of trouble he invariably took in order to get perfection, so it would

[1] 'Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci,' by J. P. Richter (vol. 1, p. 342).

[2] 'Leonardo da Vinci,' by Eugene Müntz (vol. 1, p. 62).

[3] 'Leonardo da Vinci,' Monograph by M. Adolf Rosenberg (p. 138).

[4] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 166).

[5] Rosenberg's Monograph (p. 49).

[6] The following maintain that he painted the Uffizi *Annunciation:* Dr. Bode, Bayersdorfer, Müller-Walde, Schmarzou, Makorosky, Friedländer, Sidney Colvin, Geymüller, and Gabriel Séailles. Against this are: Frizzoni, Rosenberg, Morelli, Berenson, and Thiis; the latter three, however, are the most eminent authorities on Leonardo.

[7] 'Mais le tableau qu'il peignit avec plus de soin et d'amour, fut le portrait de Lise, appellee communement La Joconde du nom de François son epoux.' *Traité de la Peinture,* M. de Piles, Paris, 1716.

have been but natural to him to paint two versions, so as to secure the very best results he possibly could whilst she was sitting for him. But a very few months previously he had made two drawings of Isabella d'Este, when she gave him the commission for her portrait in oils, which he never painted. The fact that both the Isleworth and the Louvre *Mona Lisas* are painted on canvas substantiates this, for all of his other works extant to-day are on panel. The Louvre *Mona Lisa* is described in the new edition of Vasari as 'Canvas on Panel.'[1]

In any case, we have it on the unquestioned and unquestionable authority of Fra Nuvolaria that he saw two of the master's pupils at work on two portraits; which means that they were—as was usual in those days with artists—filling in the details, he himself having painted the heads[2] and principal portions of the portraits. One of these portraits must have been the *Mona Lisa*, since, according to Vasari, Milanesi, and Ravaisson-Mollien, it was commenced in 1500. The other portrait we know Vasari was wrong in describing as that of Ginevra Benci; and in view of the fact that, at this very time, the Marchesa Isabella d'Este could not induce Leonardo to paint her portrait on any conditions whatsoever,[3] is it not a logical inference to assume that this second portrait was a second version of the *Mona Lisa*, more especially as there is not a hint or a suspicion that Leonardo painted any one else's portrait at this period?

Again, what reason, what evidence, or what authority have we for even surmising that one of the portraits seen by Fra Nuvolaria was not the *Mona Lisa?* None, except Müntz's *ipse dixit*—'What they were is unknown.' But Müntz's opinions and conclusions are by no means infallible.

As an instance, I give the following specimen of some of the fiction[4] that has been written about the *Mona Lisa*. Vasari, who had

[1] It is also given in the Medici Catalogue as canvas on panel.

[2] 'The head is always the distinctive mark of Leonardo's handiwork.' Rosenberg (p. 53).

[3] Marchesa d'Este made several efforts to get Leonardo to paint her portrait, as he had promised. She constantly wrote for five years to agents to induce the master to paint it, as well as writing to him herself direct. In a letter to him on May 14, 1504, she says: 'When you came to this country and drew our portrait in charcoal you promised you would some day paint our picture in colours.' Finally, she wrote and asked one of his relatives to call on him, and the reply she received, dated March 3, 1506, stated 'he has promised he will begin the work soon.'

[4] Another specimen, which seems incredible, is that in the print department of the South Kensington Art Museum can be seen to-day a French engraving bearing the inscription: 'La Jaconde, Maitresse de François I, par Chartier, êleve de David d'après Leonard de Vinci et gravée par Lambert.' The French King could never have met the woman during his life if he ever as much as heard of her.

never seen the picture, describing the eyebrows, said: 'They spring from the flesh, their varying thickness, the manner in which they curve according to the pores of the skin, could not have been rendered in a more natural fashion.' This is quoted by nearly all Leonardo's biographers. Müntz gravely informs us that M. Durand-Greville's research has elicited the fact that *inter alia* 'Every eyelash was carefully studied'; and he (Müntz) then laments that 'the eyebrows and eyelashes are lacking, owing, no doubt, to some bygone restoration. Faint traces of them and of the shadow they cast on the cheek are still discernible through a magnifying-glass'! Now, M. Salomon Reinach,[1] Mr. Louis Zangwill,[2] and M. Andre-Charles Coppier[3] have pointed out as an historical fact that the society ladies in Italy in Leonardo's time, during the Renaissance, shaved or pulled out their eyebrows and eyelashes with an instrument called a 'Pelatoio,' as M. Coppier states, in imitation of the ancients, and of course Leonardo knew this and did not paint them in his portraits. M. Coppier gives several reproductions of old masters of that period without eyebrows in his article in 'Les Arts.'

But in view of the evidence I have so far produced, I maintain that one of the portraits seen by Fra Nuvolaria was the *Mona Lisa;* and that the other was a second version, I shall endeavour to prove later in these pages, and that they are both still extant.

Now let us further analyse Vasari's statements about this portrait. He distinctly states that it was painted to the order of Francesco del Giocondo, the sitter's husband, and I see no reason for doubting it, nor do I remember any of Leonardo's biographers disputing it, except Mrs. Heaton, who says he 'does not seem to have commissioned this portrait; at least, it remained with the painter until he sold it to the French King.'[4] What reason or authority Mrs. Heaton had for this suggestion, I am at a loss to know. Next, Vasari tells us that Leonardo having 'toiled over the portrait for four years, left it unfinished.'[5] This is an all-important statement, for it sets a limit to the period upon which the master was at work upon the portrait, and its being described then as unfinished distinctly shows that it must then have left his possession, after which he could have had nothing more to do with it. For if the picture

[1] 'Le Bulletin des Musées de France,' 1909.

[2] 'Daily Mail,' December 22, 1913.

[3] 'Les Arts,' January, 1914.

[4] 'Leonardo da Vinci and his Works,' by Mrs. Heaton (p. 52).

[5] 'Et, après quatre ans d'efforts, il jeta ses pinceaux, "e quattro anni penatovi, lo lasciô imperfetto."' M. Gruyer, the eminent French critic in the 'Gazette des Beaux-Arts,' August, 1887.

had remained on in the possession of the painter, why set a limit of four years and declare it was then unfinished? Moreover, why should Vasari say the work was unfinished while it was still in Leonardo's hands, or if he kept it with him for five, six, or seven years, why stipulate that it was unfinished after four years? But this period of four years just brings us to the year 1505, in which Leonardo took a journey to Rome,[1] and it is only reasonable to assume that before departing for the capital, he would have given the picture, unfinished though it were, to his friend[2] Giocondo, for whom he had painted it as a great favour, and whose wife had gone to the trouble of giving him several sittings. Moreover, would not Giocondo have been anxious to get his wife's portrait; would not the wife herself have been even more so, and would they both not have induced the painter to give it to them, had he shown any hesitation to hand over the portrait they had commissioned?

Then again, for what reason would Vasari have volunteered a deliberate lie by stating that the portrait was unfinished if it were not so? There was nothing to be gained by any one or anything in making such a false statement, and it must have been a fact, not a fiction, related to him by some one who knew. Vasari had never seen the painting—nor the painter—when he wrote his book; the Louvre version had long been in France in the King's collection, as he stated, 'at Fontainebleau.' He had never been in France, and he was only four years old when Leonardo left Italy, and seven years old when he died. Moreover, had he known at the time that he was writing his life of Leonardo, that the *Mona Lisa*, then hanging in the King's collection at Fontainebleau, was one of the most highly finished[3] pictures in that collection, he would not have made himself ridiculous to posterity by describing it as unfinished. He must have got his information in Florence, and from some one who was well acquainted with Leonardo from 1500 to 1506; for, strange to say, Vasari does not deal with the life of the master

[1] 'The first interruption of his work was his journey to Rome in 1505.' Rosenberg's Monograph (p. 112).

[2] 'Her husband was Leonardo's most devoted friend. It was only for friendship that he would have undertaken to paint her, for he could have obtained orders without number if he had been willing to work for money. Even Louis XII could not obtain a portrait from him.' 'The Midsummer of Italian Art,' by F. R. Stearns, New York, 1895.

[3] 'What must have been the perfection of the ideal that floated in the master's brain, if he held such a finished masterpiece to be incomplete?' (Müntz, vol. 2, p. 158.) 'We do not understand how Leonardo, the restless, reckless seeker after truth, could say also of this work that it was unfinished.' (Rosenberg, p. 115.) 'Of all his pictures it is carried farthest in degree of finish, and Vasari's statement as to its incompleteness can only mean that Leonardo was still unsatisfied, that he never gave it what were designedly the last touches.' (McCurdy's 'Life of Leonardo,' p. 114.)

between this latter date and 1513, when he again went to Rome to settle. Vasari wrote his life of Leonardo simply on the information he obtained from those who had known the master, and from public knowledge in Florence, where it must have been a tradition that the picture was unfinished.

It is evident that Vasari did not get any information about Leonardo's life from his two most intimate friends, Melzi and Salai, who were both with him in Milan from 1506 to 1513, for Vasari has left this period a blank in his life of the master. True, he says, that after the *St. Anne* cartoon went to France the King importuned Leonardo to paint it in colours; but, ' according to his custom, he kept the King a long time waiting with nothing better than words.' Such information could but come from some one who was very intimate with Leonardo at Cloux, and Melzi seems to have been the only person who could have imparted it. But he did not meet Vasari until 1566, just sixteen years after the issue of the first edition of his ' Lives of the Painters,' in which this reference appeared. Vasari, when he commenced his life of the master, may, of course, have written to Melzi, and have thus received this private and exclusive item. But then, surely, Melzi would have told him that the *Mona Lisa* in the King's collection was a finished picture, though he would have known nothing about the unfinished *Mona Lisa* that had gone to the Giocondos in Florence before Leonardo went to Milan, where Melzi joined him when a mere boy. Therefore, it is more probable that this information came from some one connected with the French Court who had knowledge of the King's affairs, more especially as it savours somewhat of the nature of a complaint or rebuke. That Melzi worked on the *St. Anne*, the *Mona Lisa*, and other pictures at Cloux is certain, since the Cardinal of Aragon's secretary tells us the master was then (1517) paralysed, but that his Milanese pupil worked extremely well. Salai could have informed Vasari of the unfinished *Mona Lisa*, but then he would not have given him the confused particulars about the *St. Anne*, mixing up the features of the cartoon in Burlington House with those of the cartoon that went to France. Salai again knew nothing about the finishing of the *Mona Lisa* that Francis I acquired. Thus it will be seen that the two men who knew most about Leonardo's life could not have given Vasari many, if any, particulars; while neither of them knew the complete history of the respective versions of the *Mona Lisa* portrait, Melzi being ignorant of the history of the one in Florence, and Salai of the fate of the one at Cloux. Leonardo alone knew the complete history of the two versions of the picture.

But now let us see how many years Leonardo could have devoted to painting the *Mona Lisa*, and why it was left unfinished. As a matter of fact, he never spent on it four years in 'toiling' or in 'assiduous labour,' as Vasari and Müntz state; for does not Fra Nuvolaria aver that as early as March, 1501, Leonardo was devoting his whole time to mathematical studies, which had 'so drawn him away from painting that he cannot endure to use his brush'? Was it not just prior to this that he got the Servite Monks to transfer to him the order they had given to Filippino for the altar-piece in their church, for which Leonardo drew the St. Anne cartoon, but he never got any further, and the monks had again to have recourse to Filippino, who died before completing it?[1] McCurdy points out that the two historians of Caesare Borgia suggest that Leonardo was engaged in his service in the autumn of 1501. Then again in August, 1502, Caesare Borgia appointed Leonardo his engineer-in-chief;[2] but before the appointment was ratified he had already commenced his inspection of fortresses, and during that year he visited Urbino, Pasaro, Rimini, Cesina, and Cessimatico. No sooner had he finished this work than the Signoria of Florence in 1503 sent him to the Florentine encampment near Pisa, which he himself said 'placed him in his own element.'[3] On his return from Pisa he immediately undertook the commission of the Signoria for the painting of the *Battle of Anghiari* on the wall of the Sala del Consiglio in the Palazzo Vecchio, to which he devoted the whole of his time during the years 1504, 1505, and part of 1506,[4] with the exception of the time spent in his short visit to Rome in 1505. In the autumn of 1506 he finally left Florence for Milan without finishing—as usual—the Anghiari battle picture. It must be admitted that his father's death on July 9, 1504, brought him much family trouble; but quite independent of this, it was Leonardo's besetting sin seldom to finish anything he commenced.[5] But Leonardo must not be too severely reproached if

[1] Vasari's 'Lives of the Most Eminent Painters' (vol. 4, p. 100).

[2] 'This was the first occasion, probably, on which Leonardo da Vinci was permitted to realize a long-cherished dream, that of giving practical evidence of his skill in the art of war. For long this had been his supreme ambition.' (Müntz, vol. 2, p. 118.)

[3] 'Leonardo da Vinci.' Monograph by Adolf Rosenberg (p. 105).

[4] Richter's 'Leonardo' (p. 78).

[5] 'He began a panel-picture of the *Adoration of the Magi* . . . and this also remained unfinished *like his other works.*' Vasari (vol. 4, p. 95). 'He soon put it (*St. Anne*) aside half finished, *as he did with so many other pictures.*' Müntz (vol. 2, p. 118). 'How far greater would have been his success in Art had he not habitually abandoned his designs and *left his pictures in part unfinished.*' Richter's 'Life of Leonardo' (p. 73). 'He never produced finished works, although after the first manifestation of his genius he was overwhelmed with commissions by dignitaries of churches, convents, by governments, princes, noble families, with the result that, after waiting for years, they received

his great mind regarded Art as but a secondary consideration, when confronted with the vast, the wondrous, the mysterious laws and works of Nature, which he studied untiringly and attentively. He tried to probe her secrets by a survey, deep and penetrating, but of too wide a range, so that it revealed little more than the surface, like a powerful searchlight, being too transitory to leave any immediate or permanent results of value behind. As Berenson justly and eloquently remarks: 'Painting was to Leonardo so little of a preoccupation, that we must regard it as merely a mode of expression used at moments by a man of universal genius, who recurred to it only when he had no more absorbing occupation, and only when it could express what nothing else could, the highest spiritual through the highest material significance.'[1] It was only under great personal pressure of Ludovico Sforza[2] that he finished the painting of the *Last Supper*, and we all know the anecdote told by Vasari about his dilatoriness in finishing this painting.[3] Michael Angelo, we are told, upbraided him in public for not having finished the equestrian statue to Francisco Sforza in Milan on which he had spent several years. 'Thou hast abandoned it to thy hurt and shame,'[4] cried his great rival. As a matter of history, Leonardo had left most of his works unfinished up to the time he migrated to France in 1516. He failed to carry through the commission given him in 1478 for the altar-piece for the Chapel of St. Bernardo in the Palazzo Vecchio, for which he was paid twenty-five florins on account. In the same year he left the *St. Jerome in the Desert* unfinished. Two years later (1480) the Monks at St. Donato at Scopeto commissioned him to paint an altar-piece for them, and paid him a sum down in advance, but he never got further than the drawing and cartoon, the *Adoration of the Magi*. The Sforza Monument, the *St. Anne*, the *Battle of Anghiari*, all were left unfinished, and for each of the latter he had received payments on

nothing. . . . Of all his plans, of all his commissions he received, one, and one only, was carried out: the celebrated *Last Supper*.' Rosenberg (pp. 13, 14, and 48).

[1] 'The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance' (p. 68).

[2] Müntz (vol. 1, p. 186).

[3] The Prior complained to Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, that Leonardo was wasting his time and not finishing the fresco, causing the Convent great inconvenience. Whereupon the Duke summoned Leonardo to his presence and, questioning him upon the matter, the artist explained that he was at a loss for the completion of two heads: that of Christ, for which he could find no earthly model good enough, and that of Judas, for which he could discover none vile enough. Christ's head he feared he must leave unfinished, while if he could find nothing more suitable for Judas he would take the Prior's head to avoid further delay. The Duke smiled, while the Prior, fearful that his face might be handed down to posterity as that of Judas, kept silent on the subject ever after.

[4] Rosenberg (p. 102).

account. Under all these circumstances, is it surprising that Giocondo received the painting of his wife unfinished? And where, in the name of literary truth, do Müntz, Rosenberg, McCurdy, and others get their authority for stating that the master himself said the *Mona Lisa* was unfinished in the sense that it was not perfect? They have to resort to this interpretation to in any way account for Vasari's deliberate statement. It was a physical impossibility that Leonardo could have told Vasari any such thing, as they had never seen each other, and the latter must have heard it from some one who had not seen the Louvre *Mona Lisa*, since this left Leonardo's, or his pupil's, hands highly finished as it now is.

Thus everything tends to show that Leonardo did not finish the *Mona Lisa* portrait that he painted for Giocondo, and which portrait there is no reason to doubt went to its owner before Leonardo left for Rome in 1505, or at latest before he left for Milan in 1506.

In view of this it is an interesting fact that the Isleworth *Mona Lisa* has a quite unfinished background.

But now let us see what Leonardo's biographers say about the acquirement by Francis I of the *Mona Lisa*. I give their statements in the order of the dates of publication. John William Brown, after long residence in Italy and great labour and research, wrote the first English life of Leonardo; and though his opinions and conclusions may be as faulty as those of others, his translations from the Italian are very accurate. He asserts:—

> 'Francis the First bought this picture for his collection at Fontainebleau, and paid 4,000 gold crowns to the family for whom it was painted, a sum that would be equal to 45,000 francs in the present day. It is now in the Louvre.'[1]

Mrs. Heaton very ingeniously surmises that:—

> 'Francesco del Giocondo, the husband of Mona Lisa, does not seem to have commissioned this picture; at least, it remained with the painter until he sold it to the French King for 4,000 gold crowns, an enormous sum at that time.'[2]

J. P. Richter, who is unquestionably one of the greatest authorities on Da Vinci, deliberately expresses his opinion on this point in his short life of the master in the following words:—

> 'It was about the year 1504 that the portrait of *Mona Lisa*

[1] 'The Life of Leonardo da Vinci,' by John William Brown, London. William Pickering, 1828 (p. 116).

[2] 'Leonardo da Vinci and his Works,' by Mrs. Heaton, London, 1874.

was completed, at present in the Louvre Gallery. . . . He was at work upon the picture four whole years. . . . Francis I paid, a few years later, 4,000 gold florins for the portrait, an enormous sum in those days.'[1]

Eugene Müntz, in his very able and exhaustive life of Leonardo, lays it down as his belief that:—

'It is hardly probable that the portrait of *Mona Lisa* was the female portrait ordered by Guiliano de' Medici and seen in Leonardo's studio by the Cardinal d'Aragon in 1516.[2] *However that may have been*, it is certain that this artistic gem was acquired by Francis I at the price, we are told, of 4,000 gold crowns—somewhere about £8,000.'[3]

M. Rosenberg, in his monograph on Da Vinci, asserts:—

'When, at a later period, the matchless picture had passed from the ownership of those who had ordered it, into strange hands, Leonardo himself bought it for 4,000 gold ducats (about £1,800 sterling) on behalf of his Royal patron, Francis I of France.'[4]

Mr. McCurdy, in his dispassionate biography (which is the latest English life of Leonardo published), states:—

'The commission to paint *Mona Lisa* was given to Leonardo by Francesco del Giocondo. The portrait was one of the first commissions after Leonardo's return to Florence, commenced, according to Milanesi and Ravaisson-Mollien, in 1500. Vasari speaks of his lingering over it for four years and leaving it unfinished; but as this period included his term of service with Caesare Borgia, he can only have worked on it intermittently. The picture, both Vasari and Lomazzo state, was acquired by Francis I, and was at Fontainebleau; since then it has remained in the Royal Collection, ultimately the National Collection of the Louvre.'[5]

Here, be it noted, in six of the leading lives of Leonardo not one of the authors states where, how, or when the picture was bought for Francis the First. They all hold that it was painted for Mona Lisa's husband, with the exception of Mrs. Heaton, who had the

[1] 'Leonardo,' by Jean Paul Richter, Ph.D., London, 1880 (p. 88).
[2] Müntz is wrong again in this date, it should be 1517.
[3] 'Leonardo da Vinci,' by Eugene Müntz (vol. 2, p. 158).
[4] 'Leonardo da Vinci,' Monograph by Adolf Rosenberg (p. 116).
[5] 'Leonardo da Vinci,' by Edward McCurdy, M.A., London. George Bell and Sons, 1904.

temerity to suggest that it was not painted for him and that the painter sold it direct to the French King. With the exception of McCurdy, they are all agreed that the price paid for the picture was 4,000 gold crowns, equal to about £1,800, which Müntz magnifies into £8,000. Yet will it be believed that there is *no contemporaneous authority whatsoever* for this price of 4,000 gold crowns. Neither Vasari, Lomazzo, nor the anonymous biographer (edited by Milanesi) of that period, ever mentions the price paid for it; each is satisfied with stating that the picture was then (1568-1590) in the collection of Francis I, but say nothing about how he acquired it. This price was first mentioned by Père Dan in 1642, whose sole authority for it was gossip, to which he gave credit 120 years after the transaction. To come to hard facts, none of his biographers—nor any one else—knew, or knows, the price or the circumstances of the acquisition of this picture by Francis I. M. Salomon Reinach, the ablest modern critic on Da Vinci and his period, points out this fact in the ' Revue Archéologique ' (November-December, 1913), of which he is joint Editor, and as it is a most valuable contribution to the subject, I do not hesitate to quote it in full. It was written on the recent recovery of the Louvre *Mona Lisa.*

> ' Peruggia,' he writes, ' under the pretence that he was avenging the wrong done to his country by Napoleon, stole the *Mona Lisa,* whereupon the journalists, in a spirit of emulation, recalled the fact that this picture was purchased by Francis I at the cost of 12,000 francs of our money. This assertion is founded on the gossip picked up by Père Dan in 1642. In reality, the subject is veiled in complete obscurity. To start with, it is not proved that when the Cardinal of Aragon visited Leonardo at the Chateau at Cloux in 1517, the portrait of a woman that the painter showed him, " painted to the order of Julien de' Medici," was *La Jaconde.* For if this were certain, one could but conclude either of two things, as says M. Seymour de Ricci: (1) that Leonardo, after having painted the Mistresses of Ludovico de Moro, painted the portrait of a favourite of the Grand Duke of Tuscany,[1] or (2) that the unfinished portrait left by the sitter's husband on Leonardo's hands was purchased from him by the King in France, or was acquired by him from Melzi his legatee, or that it was confiscated by virtue of the numerous rights of escheat or forfeit which the Kings of France held over the properties of strangers

[1] I presume M. Reinach means a favourite of ' Julien de' Medici's,' who was created Duke of Nemours on his marriage to the aunt of Francis I; Cosmo de' Medici was the first Grand Duke of Tuscany, created such in 1569 by Pope Pius V fifty years after Leonardo's death.

who died within their territories; all of which are, however, equally doubtful. So long as it is not proved that *La Jaconde* was taken to France by Leonardo, one might surmise that Francis I had caused it to be purchased for himself in Florence, perhaps after Fra Giocondo's death, knowing the fame and value of the portrait, of which there was sufficient evidence according to Vasari's statements, though made half a century later.'[1]

This declaration, made by so eminent an authority, disposes once for all of the dogmatic statements, founded on hypothesis, made so widely upon the price paid by Francis I for the *Mona Lisa* portrait, and it exposes the complete uncertainty that exists as to the actual means and circumstances of its acquisition by him.

With the feasible and ingenious theories put forward by M. Reinach, I shall deal later when I come to the Cardinal of Aragon's visit to Leonardo, but in the meantime let us question the probability of the sale by Giocondo of his wife's portrait.

Francesco del Giocondo was a member of one of the most important families in Florence, who loved art and encouraged artists.[2] He held high official positions and was in comfortable circumstances. In 1499 he was one of the twelve ' Buonomini,' in 1512 he was one of the ' Priori ' and was confirmed in the office in 1524. His wife was much younger than he was, she was handsome, and she died before him. He had the portrait painted—no doubt as a great favour—by his friend the master. Under these circumstances, is it likely he would have sold it before his death in 1528? Could the tittle-tattle that he sold it to Leonardo on behalf of Francis I for 4,000 gold crowns be true? It is scarcely possible, considering that Leonardo did not meet the French King until immediately before or at the Concordat held in Bologna in December, 1515,[3] at which Pope Leo X was present; and Francis I returned to

[1] The translation is mine, so I append the French as it appears in the ' Revue Archéologique,' November-December, 1913 (see Appendix I).

[2] The Giocondo family had given commissions for paintings to D. Puligo, Antonio di Donnino Mazzieri, and Andre del Sarto. (Müntz, vol. 2, p. 154.)

[3] ' Giuliano de' Medici set out in July (1515) with the Papal Army and all his household, and presumably with Leonardo, to watch the movements of the French and, if necessary, to defend his possessions. . . . Leonardo apparently accompanied the Papal Army to Piacenza, and Dr. Solmi cites a note in the " Codice Atlantico " of the towns between Piacenza and Bologna as indicating his route from there to be present at the concordat held in Bologna between the Pope and the victor of Marignano, Francis I. It is entirely probable that Leonardo was present and then met Francis I, and that when, in January, 1516, a month after the concordat, the King returned to France, he took with him Leonardo, together with Francesco Melzi and his servants Salai and Baptista Villavas. The exact circumstances of his departure to France are not known.' McCurdy (p. 68). The author is wrong about Salai, as he did not go to France, for Leonardo mentions in his will that he had built himself a house on the portion of the garden he gave him.

Photo] *[Paul Laib*

THE ISLEWORTH MONA LISA (GIOCONDA)

Canvas, size 33½ in. by 25½ in.

Photo] *[Hanfstaengl*

PORTRAIT OF MONA LISA (GIOCONDA) IN THE LOUVRE

Canvas on Panel, size 30 in. by 20 in.

France within a month after. Now, is it likely, or even probable, that Francis I, immersed in affairs of state, after an arduous campaign, should have taken Leonardo aside, mayhap during the Concordat, handed him 4,000 gold crowns, and told him to go to Florence at once and purchase from Giocondo the portrait of his wife? Is it not more probable, aye, almost certain, that Giocondo kept his dead wife's portrait until his own death in 1528, immediately after which troublous times came for Florence, ending in the famous siege of the city in 1530, and after the turmoil of that great struggle the unfinished *Mona Lisa* portrait may have passed unobserved into the outer world, when its fate, like that of many another masterpiece, became unknown? This is far more probable, under all the circumstances I have enumerated, than that Francis I purchased this picture from Giocondo direct or from any outsider after his death.

Be this as it may, however, I am convinced that the face, the bust and hands of the unfinished Isleworth *Mona Lisa* are from Leonardo's brush and from none other; and it represents much more the tone and character of the work he did between 1500 and 1506 than does the Louvre version.

II

But there is direct evidence that Giocondo's picture did not become the property of Francis I. For there hangs in the Louvre to-day a 'study' by Raphael of that picture, which he must have seen in 1504, shortly after his arrival, in Florence.[1] From that study he modelled his portrait of Maddalena Doni, which he painted before his temporary return to Perugia towards the end of 1505.[2] Müntz, in his 'Life of Raphael,' says:—

> 'The beautiful drawing in the Louvre is an imitation of the *Mona Lisa*, having the same grave and easy attitude, the same full and simple modelling, and the same expression of voluptuous tenderness. The only thing wanting is the ineffable smile which has for centuries been at once the charm and despair of the admirers of the mysterious "Giocondo."'[3]

Again Müntz writes:—

> 'First of all there is the portrait of Maddelena Doni, which is, so to speak, foreshadowed in the drawing referred to above.
>
> 'A comparison of the preliminary study with the painted portrait (Doni) cannot fail to be instructive. In the study, Raphael, inspired by the recollection of the Giocondo, puts out of sight the commonplace wife of Angelo Doni and gives us a young woman with large dreamy eyes and a sensuous mouth, fit sister of Mona Lisa Giocondo.'[4]

[1] 'It is certain that in October, 1504, Raphael arrived in Florence.' 'Raphael, his Life, Work, and Times,' 1888 (p. 95). By Eugene Müntz, translated by Sir Walter Armstrong.

[2] 'The first visit to Florence does not seem to have been a prolonged one, for in 1505 Raphael is once more at Perugia, where he undoubtedly spent the best part of the year.' *Ibid.* (p. 161).

[3] *Ibid.* (p. 110).

[4] *Ibid.* (p. 161).

But this drawing by Raphael distinctly shows two columns, one on each side of the figure, and there are no such columns in the composition of the Louvre *Mona Lisa*, which only contains very dauby indications of the bases of columns. Hence it may rightly be assumed that it was not from the *Mona Lisa* now in the Louvre that Raphael took his study for his Doni portrait. Müntz tries to account for this in his ' Life of Leonardo ' by an entirely false hypothesis, saying :—

> ' One detail which has been overlooked is that the portrait (*Mona Lisa*) is enframed by two beautifully-painted columns; these are hidden by the frame.' [1]

Dr. Gronau calmly asserts in his short life of Leonardo, that ' Mona Lisa is sitting in a *loggia*, the pillars of which can be seen on the left and right of the canvas ' (p. 168).

That this is not so I can state on authority, having in my possession a document from the Louvre to that effect. But it may be argued that since the bases of columns are shown by brown daubs of paint, the columns may have been there and cut away for the purpose of framing. This scarcely can be the case without casting a stigma upon Leonardo's work, for the balustrade on which the base rests on the left-hand side of the Louvre picture (otherwise so pronounced for its shadows), gives *absolutely not the faintest indication* of a shadow of the supposed column, which it should do if the column had ever been there, and Leonardo never would have painted it without showing the shadow, since he laid such stress upon the absolute necessity of always giving full effect to shades and shadows. Did he not write : ' Shadows appear to me to be of supreme importance in perspective ' [2] And again he declared : ' Shadow partakes of the nature of universal matter. . . . Therefore, O Painter, make your shadow darkest close to the object that casts it.' [3] In his ' Trattato della Pittura ' he devotes several chapters to light and shadow, and, amongst other things, says : ' If the painter then avoids shadows, he may be said to avoid the glory of the Art, and to render his work despicable to real connoisseurs.' [4]

[1] Müntz's ' Life of Leonardo ' (vol. 2, p. 156).

[2] ' The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci,' by J. P. Richter (vol. 1, p. 70).

[3] *Ibid.* (p. 73).

[4] ' Treatise on Painting,' by Leonardo da Vinci (p. 178). Translated from the Italian by J. F. Rigaud, London, 1892. I could give numerous other quotations from him on the same subject. Lomazzo, in his Treatise, says : ' In the treatment of light Leonardo appears ever anxious to avoid making it too vivid, employing it sparingly here and there, at the same time putting in his shadows in the very deepest tones of colour.' The Portuguese artist, Francesco d'Ollando, in his treatise, written in 1549, states : ' Leonardo was the first who boldly painted shadows.'

Yet the Isleworth *Mona Lisa* not only has the columns but has the bases beautifully moulded, with the shadow distinctly painted at an angle across the left extremity of the balustrade. Compare the two reproductions of the *Mona Lisa* paintings given in this book,[1] and examine carefully Raphael's drawing, also reproduced.

If, however, the Louvre *Mona Lisa* were the second of the portraits seen by Fra Nuvolaria with the *St. Anne* in Florence in 1501—Giocondo having received his bespoken portrait in 1505—this second portrait—also, of course, unfinished—would have remained with the unfinished *St. Anne* in Florence, and they together would have accompanied Leonardo finally to France in 1516, where they would have been finished.[2] But, as Richter truly remarks, Leonardo, 'during the few years that he lived there, was in a feeble state of health'; and Cardinal d'Aragon's secretary tells us that on October 10, 1517, 'a certain paralysis has attacked his right hand,' which might account for the very imperfect bases of the suggested columns, and the total absence of the shadow even of the base; an omission which the robust Leonardo would have denounced as 'despicable' and which could not have occurred in the 1500-1504 *Mona Lisa.*

So far, then, we have two paintings of *Mona Lisa;* one, the Isleworth picture, with an unfinished background, which supports Vasari's deliberate statement of 'unfinished' and with the columns distinct, which are verified by Raphael's drawing; the second, the Louvre picture, without columns but with a highly-finished background. Moreover, it is a most significant fact that the background of the *St. Anne* and that of the Louvre *Mona Lisa* are almost similar. Müntz quotes the great French artist M. Michel's description of 'the weird landscape that stretches behind the Giocondo,' he pertinently remarks, 'the same appears in the *St. Anne.*'[3] All the numerous copies, early or late, French or otherwise, have this 'weird landscape' as a background. Again, Müntz says: 'A detail of costume

[1] The proof of the first reproduction of the Louvre *Mona Lisa* compared so unfavourably with that of the Isleworth version that the first block was returned to the makers and another obtained, which is now printed in this book. But though no pains were spared to obtain the best results possible, the comparison of the two reproductions tells its own story, and from these the reader can form his own judgment as to the respective merits of each picture.

[2] 'The King (Francis I) desired that he should colour the cartoon of *St. Anne,* but Leonardo, according to his custom, put him off for a long time with words.' Vasari (vol. 4, p. 104); also Müntz (vol. 2, p. 122).

[3] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 131). Again Rosenberg, referring to the background in the nude figure in the *Hermitage at St. Petersburg,* says: 'The carriage and the whole arrangement of the figure are akin to *Mona Lisa,* and *the resemblance between the backgrounds is still greater.*' Monograph (p. 116). This portrait was done by a pupil of the master's.

must be noted here. The sleeves of the *St. Anne* are pleated in the same fashion as those of *La Giocondo:* the two pictures are of the same date or very near it.'[1]

But the *St. Anne* is known to have been painted, if not entirely finished, at Cloux between 1516 and 1517,[2] so, therefore, must have been the Louvre *Mona Lisa,* if Müntz be correct. Again, Raphael's study does not give any indication of this 'weird landscape,' but gives a tree on the left of the figure, as does his painting of Maddalena Doni, only in the latter it is larger and more prominent. The Isleworth *Mona Lisa* gives a clump of trees in the same position, and though this may be considered a mere coincidence, it is a very remarkable one. Another notable fact is the great difference between the colouring of the two *Mona Lisas.* The Isleworth version is painted in the subdued, sombre colours of Leonardo's work done when in his prime; while the Louvre version and the *St. Anne* are in much brighter and more pronounced colours. M. Passavant noticed this difference between the *St. Anne* and the *Vièrge aux Rochers,* which was undoubtedly the most finished of Leonardo's works that went to Cloux and which are now in the Louvre. But the fatal discrepancies in the Louvre *Mona Lisa* are: the want of the columns; the representation of bases of columns by mere daubs of brown paint; the complete absence of a shadow which the brown-daubed base of a column, on the left of the picture, should cast on the balustrade, as the light is coming from the left. It would be impossible to find such a grave omission in the minute and scrupulous work done by Leonardo da Vinci at the period (1500–1504) when this Louvre version of the *Mona Lisa* is supposed to have been painted; but it would be possible and even pardonable in any senile work done by him at Cloux, after he had been struck with paralysis.

[1] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 163).

[2] 'It does not appear probable that Leonardo painted anything in France, as Vasari tells us that the King himself could not prevail on him to finish his cartoon of *Santa Anna,* which he had brought from Italy, and which was afterwards painted by some of his scholars on his outlines.' Brown's 'Life of Leonardo' (p. 168).

III

NEXT we come to the drafts of Leonardo's two letters in his own handwriting, addressed respectively to The Maréchal Chaumont, Governor of Milan, and to The Superintendent of Canals. They were written in Florence, where he was on leave in 1511, and in each he says he hopes to be back in Milan at Easter and bring with him two pictures. In his letter to Chaumont he describes them as 'due quadri di due nostre donne di varie grandezze, le quali son fatte pel cristianissimo nostre re,' which translated means, 'two pictures of two of our ladies of different size which are made for our most Christian King.'[1] In the first draft of his letter to the Superintendent, he says, 'due quadri di nostra donna chi io o' comiciate' (two pictures of our lady which I commenced). In the second draft he corrects it to 'due quadri done sono due Nostre donne di varie grandezze le quali io o' comiciate pel cristianissimo re' (two pictures on which are two of our ladies of different size, the which I commenced for our most Christian King). In each draft he says they are for the most Christian King or 'whomsoever you please.' But in Chaumont's letter he calls them 'two pictures of two of our ladies,' as also in the altered second draft to the Superintendent, while again in Chaumont's he says they are finished and in the other two they are only commenced. The alteration from 'two pictures of our lady' in the first draft, to 'two pictures of two of our ladies' in the second draft of his letter to the Superintendent, is a very significant fact. These sentences have been translated as meaning two pictures of the Madonna, or Blessed Virgin, which, I maintain, is wrong. Translated accurately, they signify 'two pictures of two of our ladies'; not—mind you—two pictures of our lady, but two pictures of *two of our ladies*,[2] and who ever heard of two 'pictures of our two Blessed Virgins'? Besides,

[1] 'Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci,' by J. P. Richter (vol. 2, pp. 404-5).

[2] In the 'Life of Da Vinci,' by John William Brown, London, 1828 (p. 285), the translation is 'two of our ladies here.' They are described as *Deux beaux portraits de femme* in the 'Biographie Universelle' (vol. 43, p. 563).

when Leonardo did write that he was painting two pictures of the Virgin in 1478, he wrote ' jeomicai le 2 vergini Marie.'[1]

Mrs. Heaton, in her life of Leonardo, p. 52, says:—

> ' The *Mona Lisa* has been supposed[2] to be one of the two to which Leonardo refers in his letter to Marshal de Chaumont. As, however, these pictures were clearly painted for the French King, it appears quite as likely that they were Madonna pictures as that they were portraits of Florentine beauties, especially as " Nostre Donne " is written with capitals ' (*sic*).

I have taken the three sentences from Jean Paul Richter's very able work of Leonardo's manuscripts (which he copied faithfully from the originals), and I see no such capitals in it.

Then again, what became of these two pictures, which Leonardo himself refers to in these draft letters? Richter, in his life of the master (p. 95), says: ' There is no evidence to show that both or even one of these paintings became the property of Louis XII, nor can we identify them with the two undoubtedly genuine Madonnas by Leonardo in the Louvre.' Now might not these two pictures—' due quadri di due nostre donne de varie grandezze '—be the unfinished *St. Anne* and one of the portraits mentioned by Fra Nuvolaria in his letter of 1501, that which Vasari erroneously described as Ginevra Benci?[3]

Leonardo made a point of describing them as of different sizes, which is most significant, and would completely answer the description of the *St. Anne* and the second version of the *Mona Lisa*, the former being a large picture and the latter portrait, in comparison, a small one. It is incredible that the two portraits mentioned by Fra Nuvolaria, as well as the two pictures for Louis XII, which we are told were known to have existed, should have completely disappeared, leaving no trace behind them, and they are in no way accounted for in any of the records of Leonardo's life. But the riddle is at once solved if we accept the not only possible, but very feasible theory that the two pictures mentioned in these letters were the unfinished *St. Anne* and the unfinished second version of *Mona Lisa*, which remained together with Leonardo; and in 1511, when pressed by Louis XII for pictures, being then his salaried Court Painter, he resolved to finish them and give them to the King, and in his letter to Marshal Chaumont described them as ' due quadri di due nostre donne di varie grandezze.' But, as usual, he never sent them, and

[1] ' Literary Works of Leonardo,' etc. J. P. Richter (vol. 1, p. 342).

[2] Evidently there has been some doubt about it before now.

[3] Brown, in his ' Life of Leonardo,' suggests that ' the two pictures here referred to are perhaps the portraits of Lisa del Giocondo and Ginevra Benci ' (p. 238).

he returned to Milan in the December, while the next year the French were expelled, so they remained on with the master.

But Milan, in consequence of the political revolution, was now in such a disturbed state that Leonardo knew it could no longer be the home of the Fine Arts, so he resolved to settle down in Rome, where Giovanni de' Medici had been elected to fill the Pontifical Throne. The following note in his own handwriting gives us the date: 'I set out from Milan for Rome on the 24th day of September, 1513,[1] with Giovanni, Francesco Melzi, Salai, Lorenzo, and Il Fanfoia.'[2] That he went to Florence *en route* is admitted by his biographers, and thence to Rome in the company, if not in the pay, of Giuliano de' Medici (Il Magnifico), the Pope's brother.[3] This meeting with Giuliano de' Medici in Florence is deserving of special notice, as it is fraught with great significance, as I shall point out later on. Moreover, during his short stay here he must have called on the Giocondos and other friends and taken final leave of them. That he had decided to settle permanently in the capital is shown by his having taken his friend Melzi and his whole household with him, as well as his unfinished pictures, drawings and manuscripts. Nor was he singular nor rash in his decision, for some of the greatest artists of the day had already gathered in the capital, in anticipation of the patronage and encouragement the recently elected Pontiff would bestow upon Art. How fully the anticipation was realized is matter of history. Under Leo X Rome once more rose to be mistress of the civilized world. Art and Literature flourished. Those engaged in them prospered, with the exception of Leonardo, by far the greatest genius of them all. He soon found his hopes and plans again shattered, and, aged and disappointed, he quitted his native land for France, in the service of Francis I, never to return.

[1] Brown, Mrs. Heaton, and Richter give this date as 1514, but Müntz and McCurdy give the correct date, 1513. Leonardo was installed in the Belvedere in Rome by Leo X in December, 1513, and was in Parma on a visit on September 25, 1514.

[2] In the MSS. of the Institut E (folio 1), given in McCurdy's 'Life of Leonardo' (p. 64). Also Richter, 'Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci' (vol. 2, p. 441).

[3] 'He went to Rome with Duke Giuliano de' Medici, at the election of Pope Leo.' Vasari, 'Lives of the Most Eminent Painters' (vol. 4, p. 103). Newly translated by Gaston Du C. de Vere (10 vols.), London, 1912-14. McCurdy, in his 'Life of Leonardo,' says: 'He was in Florence on October 10, 1513, and there probably met and travelled on with Giuliano de' Medici, Il Magnifico, the Pope's brother, who was his patron during his stay in Rome' (p. 64). 'The master left Milan for Rome,' writes Müntz (vol. 2, p. 193), 'on September 24, 1513 . . . on the 27th halted at San Angelo on the Po. At Florence—if I do not misunderstand a passage in Vasari—Leonardo attached himself and his following to Giuliano de' Medici, who was about to leave for Rome to join his brother, the Pope. . . . He hastened to attach Leonardo to his own person, assigning him a monthly sum of thirty-three gold ducats—a magnificent salary.'

IV

The final piece of direct contemporaneous evidence we have about the life of Leonardo is the Cardinal of Aragon's visit to him at Cloux, near Amboise, in France, where in tranquillity, almost seclusion, he spent his last years in the house granted to him by Francis I. Mr. McCurdy, in his life of Leonardo, refers to this interview, thus :—

> 'The only contemporary account of his life at Cloux is that of a visit paid to him by the Cardinal of Aragon on October 10, 1517, as described by the Cardinal's secretary . . . "a certain paralysis has," he says, "attacked his right hand which forbids the expecting of any more good work from him, but he has given a very good training to a Milanese pupil who works extremely well, and although Leonardo can no longer colour with that sweetness with which he was wont, he is still able to make drawings and to teach others." '

Again, in 'Leonardo da Vinci's Notebooks' (p. 27), Mr. McCurdy says :—

> 'The manuscripts as a whole are picturesquely described in the diary of a certain Antonio de Beatis, the Secretary of the Cardinal of Aragon, who, with his patron, visited Leonardo at Amboise in October, 1517. The many wanderings of the painter's life were then ended, and he was living with Francesco Melzi and his servant Battisda de Villenais in the Manor House of Cloux, the gift of Francis I. The diary relates that he showed his guests three pictures, the *St. John*, the *Madonna with St. Anne*, and the portrait of a Florentine lady, painted at the request of Giuliano de' Medici, which cannot now be identified.'

Müntz, referring to this visit (vol. 2, p. 211), states:—

'On October 10, 1516,[1] the Cardinal of Aragon visited Leonardo. . . . His secretary, Antonio de Beatis of Amalfi (all honour to him!), carefully noted down the details of this interview. He tells us that the master showed the Prelate three pictures: a female portrait, ordered from him by the late Giuliano de' Medici, a *St. John the Baptist as a Youth*, and a *Madonna with the Child* on the lap of St. Anne, all three of them very perfect.'

It is a very remarkable fact that Müntz here calls the first picture 'a female portrait,'[2] whereas in a footnote he gives the text of Beatis's notes, in which it is described as 'uno di certa donna florentina, facta di naturale ad instantia del quodam Magnifico Juliano de' Medici,' which, being translated, means 'one (picture) of a certain Florentine lady made (or painted) *from life* to the order of the late Magnifico Juliano de' Medici.' He then elaborates on the beauty of the *St. John*, the most doubtful picture of the three, and adds, 'some short time after this visit the masterpiece passed into the collection of King Francis I.'

Now here we have a Florentine lady's portrait painted from life to the order of Giuliano de' Medici distinctly recorded by Leonardo himself. But why should Guiliano have chosen and ordered a Florentine lady? Surely there must have been some strong reason for it, more especially as his brother had recently been elected Pope, and one of the master's already famous Madonnas would have been more expedient in every way. Could Giuliano de' Medici, while chief of the Republic of Florence from 1512 to the time of Leonardo's visit in October, 1513, have seen Giocondo's portrait of his wife? Or if not, could Leonardo have shown it to him during this short visit in Florence before they left together for Rome? My theory is that Giuliano de' Medici did see Giocondo's *Mona Lisa*, probably with Leonardo, in Florence, and that being much impressed with it, and finding it not for sale, he forthwith gave the master an order to paint him a Florentine lady; or, maybe, Leonardo told him he had the second version and Guiliano gave him the order to finish it, but, as usual, he did not, and later it accompanied the master with the *St. Anne* to France. Remember, Leonardo told the Cardinal it was painted *from life*, which would be distinctly true of the second version of the *Mona Lisa*.

[1] Uzielli, in his 'Richerche intorno a Leonardo da Vinci' (vol. 2, p. 460, 1st edition), gives the date as 1516, but Dr. Müller-Walde has corrected this to 1517, and so has Uzielli in the first (and only) volume of his second edition (p. xx, note 1, for Italian text see Appendix 2).

[2] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 211).

Mr. McCurdy tries to account for this statement of Leonardo's in the following manner:—

> ' The Cardinal of Aragon, on visiting the painter at Amboise in 1517, was shown a portrait of a certain Florentine lady, painted from life, at the request of Giuliano de' Medici. This must have reference to a picture painted in Rome (for there only the connection existed between Leonardo and his patron) and painted presumably before January, 1515, when, as Leonardo records, " Giuliano set out to go and marry a wife in Savoy." '[1]

If Mr. McCurdy's theory be correct and the picture was painted in Rome before 1515, why did Giuliano de' Medici order the portrait of a Florentine lady instead of a Roman lady, since he and the master were then in Rome? And why did he not get his picture on his return with his wife to Rome in the February, or before they left again in the July. His conclusion as to the fate of the *Florentine Lady* picture is that ' it cannot now be identified.' But surely this picture, of which there is a living record by the master himself, could not have completely vanished, except by design, from the quiet retreat at Cloux.

Müntz dismisses the fate of the portrait of the *Florentine Lady* by suggesting ' that it is hardly probable ' that it was the *Mona Lisa*, which, ' however that may have been, it is certain that this artistic gem was acquired by Francis I.' But surely Müntz's doubt is not as strong as the sequence that it must have been the *Mona Lisa*, unless it was a portrait by Leonardo that was wilfully destroyed after the famous interview at Cloux, since there is no trace of it whatever after that occasion, except *as* the *Mona Lisa*, now in the Louvre.

Again, M. Reinach says it is not proved that the portrait shown at Cloux was the *Mona Lisa*, for if it were we could then but conclude that Leonardo had either painted a mistress of Giuliano de' Medici to his order; or that Giocondo had left his wife's portrait on Leonardo's hands, which was afterwards obtained by Francis I either by purchase from Leonardo, or from his legatee Melzi, or by seizure; or purchased after Giocondo's death. In reply to these suggestions, let me point out that Leonardo had not the time during his short stay of a week or so in Florence in 1513 to paint from life a mistress of his new patron; nor is it probable that he could have painted her in Rome, if she were there, while he was lodged in the Vatican, or while travelling about as he did when not in the Vatican.

[1] ' Leonardo da Vinci,' by Edward McCurdy, M.A. (p. 65).

As to M. Reinach's alternative that Giocondo must have left the *Mona Lisa* on Leonardo's hands and it afterwards became the property of Francis I, this would not account for Leonardo telling the Cardinal that he had painted it to the order of Giuliano de' Medici, which would have been a deliberate and gratuitous lie that Leonardo could scarcely have been guilty of, and for which there was no earthly necessity. As to the King's acquisition of the picture direct from Leonardo himself in France, it is hardly possible, as I have shown, besides which in his will, made nine days before his death, he left Melzi 'the instruments *and portraits* appertaining to his art and calling as a Painter,'[1] a proceeding that would have been a solemn farce, performed in the presence of several witnesses, besides Melzi himself who was there, unless Leonardo had the portraits at the time in his possession to leave.[2] The King could not have seized it under the law affecting dead aliens' property, since he gave Leonardo, as a special favour, the right and power to will his possessions.[3] That Francis the First, after Giocondo's death in 1528, literally chased the portrait of the dead man's wife, does not tally with the history of the time when the King was more seriously engaged in foreign political complications. Thus, it will be seen that none of M. Reinach's theories can be justified in the light of probability or circumstance.

On the strength of the will, I think we may fairly assume that the *St. Anne*, the *St. John*, and the *Mona Lisa, alias* the 'Florentine Lady,' were acquired by Francis I from Leonardo's legatee, Melzi. Moreover, if Leonardo spoke the truth, there is but one possible solution: that the portrait shown by him to the Cardinal, and described by him as 'A Florentine lady painted from life to the order of the late Giuliano de' Medici,' was the second version of the *Mona Lisa:* because, if such, it would have been commenced in Florence in 1500, when Madonna Lisa sat for the master, and in 1513, when Giuliano de' Medici gave the order, it was then still unfinished; and if it were finished at Cloux (as was the *St. Anne* and others) in compliance with Giuliano's order, this would have

[1] The exact words of the will are: 'Che il dicto Tentatore ha de presente et altai instrumenti et Portracti circa l'arte sua et industria de Pictovi.' 'The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci,' by J. P. Richter (vol. 2, p. 468); also 'Leonardo da Vinci's Note-books,' McCurdy (p. 28).

[2] The only two he had were those of *Isabella d'Este* and *Mona Lisa,* both now in the Louvre.

[3] 'As he had letters patent from the most Christian King enabling him to bequeath his property to whom he pleased, without which he could not have done so, he made a will. . . .' Extract from letter of Francisco Melzi to Leonardo's brothers informing them of his death.

Photo] [*Braun, Clément & Cie.*

A STUDY (IN THE LOUVRE) BY RAPHAEL FROM THE ORIGINAL MONA LISA

completely justified Leonardo's declaration to the Cardinal. Whereas, if the picture shown at Cloux were the unfinished *Mona Lisa*, painted, also in 1500, to the order of Giocondo—the sitter's husband—then Leonardo was guilty of making a precise, deliberate, voluntary, and wantonly false assertion to the Cardinal, for which there was neither justification nor necessity. Of course, there is one alternative, and that is that Leonardo, or Melzi, deliberately, and ' with malice aforethought,' destroyed the *Florentine Lady* portrait in the quiet, secluded home at Cloux, so as to leave no trace of it, a proceeding I do not feel qualified to deal with. It could not have been stolen from the quiet retreat, or the world would have heard more about the stolen ' Florentine Lady ' than it has of, even, the Louvre *Mona Lisa*. Yet what are we asked to believe from Leonardo's biographers, but that out of three pictures shown at Cloux, two of them went into the King's collection, while the third completely disappeared, although the painter's own description of it as a ' Florentine Lady ' exactly fits the *Mona Lisa* that now hangs with the other two in the Louvre; while all the time there is not the minutest particle of evidence to prove that the ' Florentine Lady ' is not the *Mona Lisa* now in the Louvre.

Again, Monsieur André Charles Coppier, the French art critic, is so convinced and so positive that the ' Florentine Lady ' portrait, shown to the Cardinal of Aragon at Cloux, is the portrait now in the Louvre, known as *La Joconde* or the *Mona Lisa*, that he contributed an article of eight pages which appeared in the well-known French art journal, ' Les Arts,' for January, 1914, advancing a new, but absolutely false, theory on the subject. M. Coppier freely and justly criticises and ridicules Vasari's statements about the eyebrows and eyelashes, and the alleged four years' labour spent by Leonardo on the portrait. He calls Vasari a ' great bragger ' and ' the inventor of the legend of *Mona Lisa*,' and then goes so far as to try and prove that Vasari invented the legend that Francesco del Giocondo ordered the portrait of his wife, and denies that Leonardo ever painted her! He says the picture of the Florentine Lady now in the Louvre (known as the *Mona Lisa* for close upon four centuries) was not painted until after 1512, and consequently could not be the wife of Giocondo. He entirely overlooks Raphael's study of the picture drawn before 1505, which is proof positive that Leonardo did paint the *Mona Lisa* before that date. He states:—

> ' For, we have on the subject of this famous painting, *but one single contemporary declaration* BUT THAT " CAPITALE," *coming as it does direct from Da Vinci himself*, who, on showing

it to the Cardinal of Aragon, assured him that IT WAS EXECUTED AT THE INSTANCE OF JULIEN DE MEDICIS.'[1]

Then he points out that Julien (Italian, Giuliano) had not always had the good fortune to be master of the City of Florence and brother of a Pope, and generalissimo of his armies. He had been exiled, with his elder brothers, in 1494, from Florence, and had to enter the service of different Italian princes for a livelihood. The youngest of the Medicis was not therefore in a position to take Leonardo into his service, nor yet to give him an order for any work of art whatever, before the month of September, 1512, when he was able to re-enter Florence at the rear of the army of Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi, who, at the head of his Spanish troops, had come to prepare the solemn entry of Julien's brother the Cardinal. The latter did not appear until September 14th, accompanied by a thousand lances and escorted by Julien and their cousin, 'Jules de Medicis.' Two days later they forced the 'Gonfalonier Ridolfi' (Pietro Sodoreni?)[2] to resign, and Julien was appointed head of the Republic of Florence. Having regained their power and possessions, confiscated in 1494, the Medicis immediately took up the tradition of their illustrious father in Florence, and Julien at once attached Leonardo to his person. Here, I think, M. Coppier is again wrong, for did not Leonardo return to Milan in 1511?[3] And he asks, is it suggested that during the few months[4] he was in Florence, Leonardo would have asked his intimate friend Giocondo to permit him to paint his wife's portrait, and that the friend would have accorded the request? Is it to be suggested, he says, that the artist had recourse to this model for the picture he had promised Prince Julien de Medici? He then discourses upon her birth, her marriage, etc., and shows that in 1512 she must have been at least thirty-five years old, while the portrait is that of a woman of from twenty-six to twenty-eight. Moreover, he states that after leaving Florence in 1513, Leonardo would no longer have had Giocondo's

[1] 'Les Arts,' January, 1914. The italics and capitals are not mine. See Appendix 3.

[2] I think M. Coppier is in error here, as Gonfalonier Pietro Soderini held the office from 1502, when he was appointed for life, until the return of the Medicis in 1512.

[3] In his draft letters already quoted he says he will be in Milan before Easter (1511). Brown, in his 'Life of Leonardo,' says: 'Accordingly, in 1512 he set out with his scholar Salaino (Salai) and his friend Lomazzo for his old residence, where he principally employed himself in hydraulical researches in order to perfect the canal by which he had brought the Adda to the walls of the city' (p. 130). Brown took the dates of the letters to be 1512, but they are now accepted by Richter and other authorities as 1511. Richter says: 'In the December of 1511 Leonardo was again in Milan. There is evidence of this in the Windsor manuscripts.'

[4] Leonardo was only in Florence for a few days, instead of months, in October, 1513.

wife as a model for the portrait. And all this is to try and prove that the history of the *Mona Lisa* is a fairy tale, because the picture of the ' Florentine Lady ' shown to the Cardinal at Cloux, and now in the Louvre, could not have been painted until after 1512, and, consequently, could not have been the *Mona Lisa.* M. Coppier would do well to study carefully Raphael's drawing in the Louvre. I, however, agree with him that the portrait in the Louvre is the same portrait as shown by Leonardo to the Cardinal at Cloux, also that it was not painted, or rather finished, until after 1512, though commenced in 1500—the same as was the *St. Anne*—but I believe it to be the second version of the *Mona Lisa,* a very simple, possible, and probable solution that does not require false or fantastic theories to support it.

Another great French art critic, M. Gruyer, informs us that every one who has seen the *Mona Lisa* portrait for close upon four centuries, has lost his head over it, and that it is the most precious gift from Francis I to the gallery of the Louvre. But he goes further, and states :—

> ' From the moment that it was painted, until our own day, one can trace it without losing sight of it for a single instant. Leonardo painted it between 1500 and 1504, and it was he himself who purchased it for 4,000 " écus d'or " (about 45,000 francs) on behalf of the King of France. It entered the " Cabinet doré " at Fontainebleau, where Father Dan still found it in 1642. Louis XIV transferred it to Versailles, where Bailly noticed it in the " Petite Galerie du Roy " in 1709. The Revolution caused it to be brought to Paris and placed in the National Museum. From those days, in fact, it took its place in the " Salon Carré," which it holds to-day.' [1]

M. Gruyer is here inaccurate in three of his principal details. Firstly, the picture cannot be traced from the moment it was painted as we have seen above; secondly, the price paid for it is founded on gossip; and, thirdly, it was not transferred direct from Versailles to the Salon Carré of the Louvre. For Richardson, the son of the well-known English painter, collector, and connoisseur, saw it in Coypel's house in Paris during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, when he made a tour of Europe to see all the art treasures of the Continent. In his itinerary he says :—

> ' The French King's pictures in Coypel's house : *L. da Vinci.* The " Jocunda " spoken of at large by Vasari in the life of this

[1] ' Gazette des Beaux-Arts,' August 1, 1887. See Appendix 4.

master. I consider'd it with the utmost attention; landskip, and every part, and find it the same as my father's in every respect; the same particularly in the colouring of the hands, as distinguished from that of the face: so that at that distance I could remember no difference, nor can I tell which I should chuse.'[1]

Now I come to the last, and the latest, though by no means the least, of the authorities that I purpose dealing with. Dr. Jens Thiis, in his very able book upon Leonardo's early work, makes but a short reference to the famous picture under discussion when he says:—

'In the portrait of *Mona Lisa* we delight in the wonderful sweetness that is inseparable from the most perfect maturity; but one step further, and over-ripeness supervenes, and the sweetness acquires a nauseating after-taste. Leonardo's numerous school readily took this step. In a picture such as *St. John the Baptist*, in the Louvre, which is closely connected with the ageing Leonardo, but can scarcely have been painted by his own hand, the over-ripeness has already set in, and a tainted flavour accompanies the charm.'[2]

With the utmost respect for Dr. Thiis's opinion, I maintain that 'the one step further' is discernible in the Louvre *Mona Lisa*, and 'over-ripeness supervenes,' though to a much less extent than in the *St. John*. For what says the great French historian Michelet of the Louvre *Mona Lisa?* He calls it a 'dangerous picture,' and classes it with the *St. John* and the *Bacchus*, both at that time attributed to Leonardo; but which are now admittedly not his but his pupil's.

'This canvas,' he says, 'entices me, calls me, usurps me, absorbs me; I go to it in spite of myself, as the bird goes to the serpent. . . . There is a strange look of Alcina's Island[3] in the eyes of La Joconde, gracious and smiling phantom. You would believe her attentively reading the airy stories of Boccaccio.'[4]

[1] 'Mr. Richardson's Account of Statues and Pictures, Bas-reliefs and Drawings, in Italy, France, etc.' London, MDCCXXII (p. 16).

[2] 'Leonardo da Vinci,' by Dr. Jens Thiis (p. 62).

[3] 'Thou, too, that to this fatal Isle art led
By way unwonted and till now unknown,
That some possessor of the fairy's bed
May be for thee transformed to wave or stone,
Thou shalt, with more than mortal pleasures fed,
Have from Alcina seigniory and throne;
But shalt be sure to join the common flock,
Transformed to beast or fountain, plant or rock.'

Canto vi. verse lii. Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso.' Translated by W. Rose, London, 1858.

[4] 'Histoire de France' (vol. 9, pp. 88, 89, 90), par Jules Michelet, Paris, 1879. See Appendix 5. M. Gruyer says: 'She has been regarded in turn as the most charming or the most perfidious of women.' See Appendix 4.

There can be no doubt as to what the great historian means here by his reference to Alcina's Island, the life on which is reflected in Joconda's eyes, and described in Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso.'[1] Mr. T. P. Armstrong, alluding to Michelet's avowal, declares: 'It represents not a person so much as an idea, the bad and the dangerous side of the Italian Renaissance movement.'[2] Referring to Mr. Armstrong's statement, Mr. Louis Zangwill expressed the opinion that 'It is well that this aspect of the Renaissance should not be forgotten; the Pagan revival of those times, like the cruder Pagan revival among us to-day, was also a revival of Pagan vices.'[3]

But this 'step further' of 'over-ripeness' is in none of Leonardo's pre-Cloux drawings, studies, or pictures. Take the drawing for the portrait of Isabella d'Este, and the *Female Head* (silver-point study on tinted paper) in the Louvre; take the *Study of a Girl's Head* and the *Woman's Head with the Old Man* in the Uffizi in Florence; take the *Woman's Head* (silver-point) at Windsor; take the *Portrait Study*, and the *Girl's Head* in Milan; take the study of the *Girl's Head for the Bacchus* in the Academy at Venice; take the head of the Isleworth *Mona Lisa*, all from Leonardo's own hand, and compare the beautiful, natural, amiable, smiling, straightforward expressions on all of these with the leer on the Louvre *Mona Lisa*, and the 'step further' of over-ripeness in the latter becomes most pronounced. I will even venture further: take the head of the Virgin in the picture of *The Virgin among the Rocks*, in the National Gallery, and compare it with the head of the Virgin in the picture of *The Virgin among the Rocks*, in the Louvre, and a difference of expression is quite appreciable.[4] While again, take the heads of the Virgin and St. Anne with their smiles in the Saint Anne cartoon in Burlington House, and compare them with those of the *St. Anne* painting in the Louvre, and you have in a slight degree 'the over-ripeness' distinctly marked in the latter.[5]

[1] Neither Dr. Smith nor Lempriere mention Alcina in their Classical Dictionaries, but the Rev. Dr. Brewer, in his 'Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,' says: 'Alcina. The personification of carnal pleasure in "Orlando Furioso"; the *Circë* of the Greeks and *Labë* of the Arabians. She enjoyed her lovers for a time, and then changed them into trees, stones, fountains, or beasts, as her fancy dictated.'

[2] 'Daily Mail,' December 20, 1913.

[3] 'Daily Mail,' December 22, 1913.

[4] Waagen says 'this picture cannot have been the work of Leonardo . . . the heads of the Virgin and angel are without expression and display a surprising feebleness of design . . . folds of drapery are false and stiff appearance.' Theophile Gautier thinks: 'The mouth a little large, it is true, but smiling with a deliciously enigmatic expression that Da Vinci gives to his female faces, a tiny shade of mischief mingling with the purity and goodness.'

[5] Waagen attributes the *St. Anne* to a pupil, 'So much is the usual smile of his

But in the *St. John* the 'over-ripeness' is so marked, that Dr. Thiis cannot accept it as Leonardo's work. Yet the *St. John* and the *St. Anne* were painted at Cloux, where the Louvre *Mona Lisa* was also finished. All three are undoubtedly 'closely connected with the ageing Leonardo,' to use the words of Dr. Thiis, and at this very time, the Cardinal of Aragon's secretary tells us, Leonardo was ably assisted by 'a Milanese pupil who works exceedingly well,' and who, no doubt, was a member of the master's 'numerous school who readily took the one step further' of 'over-ripeness,' as Dr. Thiis asserts.

Again, M. Coppier insists: 'It is not the *Mona Lisa* that has just returned to the Gallery of the Louvre, but the ideal conception of the greatest master of the Renaissance, the most perfect sister of the *St. Anne* and the *St. John*.'[1] M. Gruyer endorses this: 'These three pictures,' he says, 'are of the same art, the same spirit, the same style, the same period.'[2] Michelet, the great French historian, classes the *Mona Lisa* with the *St. John* and the *Bacchus*. Theophile Gautier calmly assures us that there is 'a shade of mischief mingling in the smile' of the Mother of Christ in the Louvre *Vièrge aux Rochers*, while Passavant described it as 'probably a copy.' Waagen attributes the Louvre *St. Anne* to one of Leonardo's pupils, because 'the smile is so exaggerated and affected'; and Dr. Gronau admits that this same smile resembles that in the *Mona Lisa!* Rosenberg declares the master's 'hand traceable in the picture, which was certainly painted under his supervision and with his help.' Müntz extols the 'wonderful little *St. John the Baptist*,' calls it a 'masterpiece,' but admits it was 'certainly one of Leonardo's last works.'

The later critics and biographers refuse to attribute the *St. John* in the Louvre to Leonardo, while they have completely discarded the

figures here exaggerated and affected.' Rosini believed it to be a work of Salai, perhaps retouched by Leonardo, unless it be by Luini. M. Delécluze supports Rosini's theory. Referring to the *St. Anne* cartoon in the Royal Academy, Dr. Gronau says: 'The staid, calm expression of the heads could not easily be surpassed' (p. 137). Of the Louvre *St. Anne* he asks you to 'Mark carefully how finely-toned is the smile in these three figures, in keeping with the age of each. In the case of the older woman, it is calm and faintly visible, as in the portrait of *Mona Lisa*' (p. 141). Kugler, in his 'Handbook of Painting,' says: 'The *St. Anne* is erroneously ascribed to Leonardo. The smile, sometimes approaching to a coquettish expression, is rather mannered in this picture, though the original cartoon is free from all such tendency, and is of the highest nobility of sentiment.' (Part 2, p. 286, 3rd Edition, London, 1855.) Rosenberg declares: 'The picture has been sadly injured. The majority of art students are, however, of opinion that the hand of the master may still be recognized in it, and that it was at any rate painted under his supervision and with his help.' Monograph (p. 96).

[1] 'Les Arts,' January, 1914 (p. 9).

[2] See Appendix 4.

Bacchus.[1] After comparing unfavourably the smile on the *St. John* with that of *Mona Lisa*, Dr. Gronau asserts:—

> 'The smile is somewhat unpleasing in its extravagance. . . . It is too strongly pronounced. But probably the master's hand being crippled by paralysis, he did not put the final touches to the picture, while the pupil could produce the outward effect but not the spirit.'[2]

Dr. Thiis, in the same manner, on this subject, declares:—

> 'In a picture such as *St. John the Baptist*, in the Louvre, which is closely connected with the ageing Leonardo, but can scarcely have been painted by his own hand, the over-ripeness has already set in, and a tainted flavour accompanies the charm.'[3]

Now let us leave the realms of opinion and conjecture and come down to hard facts. It is admitted on all sides that Leonardo left most of his works unfinished. The only pictures known to have been completed by him before he went to France were the *Annunciation*, painted when a boy; the *Last Supper*, under pressure from Ludovico Sforza during his first sojourn in Milan; and the *Madonna dell Rocce* in the church of St. Francis in Milan, during his second residence there. That he took all his unfinished paintings with him to France is certain from the fact that they eventually were in the collection of Francis I and are now in the Louvre, with the exception of the *Leda* and the *Pomona*, that are supposed to have been destroyed while in the King's collection. Therefore, the pictures that arrived at Cloux, nearly all in the first stages of progression, were the *St. Anne*, the *Mona Lisa*, the *Vièrge aux Rochers*, the *St. John*, the *Bacchus*, the *Leda*, and the *Pomona*. In the first three we have evidence of the master's work, but in two of them, the *St. Anne* and the *Vièrge aux Rochers*, some very able authorities believe they recognize the pupil's handiwork as well. The *St. John*, the *Bacchus*, the *Leda*, and the *Pomona* can, without injustice to any one, be attributed to Melzi, that is, their completion, all of the pictures having been drawn and commenced by the master before

[1] 'The picture of *Bacchus* in the Louvre need not be mentioned here, for originally this figure represented John the Baptist. Subsequently, although in Leonardo's time, it was changed into a Bacchus, but only in outward details. Further, the picture clearly betrays the hand of one of Leonardo's pupils; and of all the pictures associated with Leonardo's name it is the most indifferent.' Dr. Gronau, p. 146. Dr. Thiis does not even mention this picture.

[2] Dr. Gronau, p. 176.

[3] Dr. Thiis, p. 62.

he went to France. Now Leonardo could not have arrived in France until the early spring of 1516. After his arrival he was at Fontainebleau and other places with his patron Francis I in connection with architectural and other works. He could, therefore, not have been settled down in Cloux until well into the autumn of 1516. But Vasari tells us the King pressed him to paint the *St. Anne*, 'but Leonardo, according to his custom, kept the King a long time waiting with nothing better than words.' The duration of this 'long time' we cannot estimate, but we know the picture was shown as it is to-day to the Cardinal of Aragon on October 10, 1517. Yet the Cardinal's secretary tells us that at this date 'a certain paralysis has attacked his right hand which forbids the expecting of *any more good work from him*, but he has given a very good training to a Milanese pupil who works extremely well.'[1] Now let us analyse this sentence. At this date paralysis had already attacked Leonardo's right hand, how long since he does not say, but it must have been some time previously, for there had been time to test the pupil's work that was described as 'extremely well' done. Therefore Leonardo, who had only completed three pictures from 1470 to 1516, is credited with completing seven pictures in as many months, or certainly in considerably under a year, and we have ample evidence as to the pace at which he worked! Hence the justifiable disagreement of the critics on the *St. Anne* and the *Vièrge aux Rochers*, though none of them question the *Mona Lisa* with the Alcina glow upon her countenance. The would-be, attempted modest look on the bent head of Saint Anne in the Louvre picture Gronau compares to that of the *Mona Lisa* and the *Leda*,[2] and he describes the smile as 'faintly visible, as in the portrait of *Mona Lisa*.' Leonardo probably noticed this and consequently prevented Melzi finishing the picture. The sickly smiles on the unsexed *St. John* and on the *Bacchus* are certainly not Leonardo's work, as the latest authorities frankly state. Had Leonardo the time to paint the *Leda* or the *Pomona?* Or is the *Leda* the picture in the Borghese Gallery in Rome, finished by Melzi, which Richardson mentions in his itinerary[3] as the accredited work of Leonardo, and

[1] Müntz (vol. 2. p. 211), McCurdy (p. 70). These two authors give the same translation from the Italian almost word for word, while they both give the identical words in the portion of the sentence which I have italicised.

[2] Referring to the *Leda*, he says: 'The head with the downcast eyes is depicted in the way familiar to all who know the *Mona Lisa* or the *Saint Anna*' (p. 150).

[3] Richardson when visiting the galleries of Europe saw in the Palazzo Borghese in Rome a Leda, which he describes as 'In the room where the prince sleeps after dinner, the *Leda* of Leonardo da Vinci, the same my Lord Pembroke has; soft, mellow, and well drawn' (p. 184).

is the *Pomona*[1] in Berlin the one supposed to have been painted by the master? These two pictures may be the same as were at Fontainebleau, mentioned by Lomazzo, though they differ slightly with some of the details given in his descriptions of the pictures. In any case, this is a mere suggestion made in order to account for the two attributed Leonardo paintings that disappeared from the Fontainebleau Collection.

There is one other factor of some significance in connection with the *Mona Lisa* portrait that should be taken into account, and that is that prior to its painting the Giocondos had suffered a great bereavement in the death of their little child. Vasari tells us that Leonardo, while painting Madonna Lisa Giocondo's portrait, entertained her with singers and jesters 'who might make her remain merry, in order to take away that melancholy which painters are often wont to give to their portraits.'[2] Was it not more likely that the master did this to distract her from her thoughts and sorrow—as indeed M. Salomon Reinach has truly remarked:—

> 'Mona Lisa had lost an only daughter, she was a distressed mother. Leonardo, when beginning to paint her portrait, about 1501, found she looked dejected, and, in order to elicit a smile from her, he called in jesters and musicians. Vasari's story is true, though he himself missed the reason and point of it.'[3]

Moreover, as M. Reinach says, this 'distressed mother,' when the portrait was painted, wore a transparent black veil over her head, had on a sombre dress, which, with a complete absence of jewellery or any sort of ornament, show that she was 'still in mourning';[4] and this fixes the date of the sittings as in 1500, her child having died in June, 1499.[5]

But I ask in all seriousness: Does the Louvre *Mona Lisa* represent the idea of a sorrowing mother painted for a husband who shares her grief? Scarcely so. Is it not more of a tone to suit the whimsical fancy of a Louis XII, a Giuliano de' Medici, or a Francis I? Yet the Isleworth *Mona Lisa* emphatically does. The

[1] 'Among the rare works of Francesco Melzi, there is an excellent representation of this mythical scene (*Pomona*) in the painting in the Berlin Gallery (No. 222), the figures in which are life-size. The head of Pomona is painted with special charm, and in the other parts of the picture Leonardo's influence is clearly discernible.' Richter's 'Life of Leonardo,' p. 104.

[2] Vasari (vol. 4, p. 101).

[3] Article by M. Salomon Reinach in the 'Art Journal' (p. 22), 1912.

[4] M. Reinach in an article in the 'Bulletin des Musees de France,' 1901 (p. 21). See Appendix 6.

[5] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 154).

ineffably calm, steady gaze from the beautiful eyes, and the sweet, sad, forced smile, speak to you from the canvas, not of coquettishness, not of cunning, not of intrigue, but of that calm resignation born of deep sorrow, which appeals and touches the human heart, and which represents all that is great, heroic, and ennobling in life, and all that Leonardo so much admired. There is not a breath of suspicion that this genius of the ages was ever specially attracted in the vigour of his manhood by any member of the opposite sex. He admired everything beautiful in nature, in art, in man, woman and child, and we have no right to assume that in his closing years he would have been so allured by the leer of a woman as to perpetuate it for all time on his immortal canvas. This is yet another reason for believing that the Isleworth *Mona Lisa* is the portrait painted for the Giocondos. But whether it be or not, from the evidence I have produced, I believe there were two versions of the *Mona Lisa* painted—the second of which now hangs in the Louvre.

In view of the alleged loss and complete disappearance of five of Leonardo's pictures, namely, the two portraits seen by Fra Nuvolaria, the two pictures of ' two of our ladies ' mentioned in the drafts of his letters, and the ' Florentine Lady ' shown by him to the Cardinal of Aragon at Cloux, it is essential here to point out that Leonardo personally never lost a single picture nor a single drawing. All his pictures that were really lost can be traced to other hands after they had left the master's. But there is no trace of these five. Even some of his earliest drawings are still to the fore, in spite of the fact that they were so little valued after Melzi's death that they were left uncared for in the attic of the house of his relative, Dr. Orazio Melzi, at Vaprio,[1] and it is surprising under the circumstances that so many were saved. Of these drawings we have his landscape, in the Uffizi, dated 1473, in his own handwriting, when he was only twenty-one years old; the *John the Baptist* silverpoint study, 1476,[1] at Windsor; Mr. Bernhard Berenson, in his great work, ' The Drawings of the Florentine Masters,' gives the second pen sketch as 1478, ' representing the bust of an old man in profile to right and facing him the head of a youth,' now in the Uffizi; another, the sketch of a man that was hanged in Florence

[1] ' Lelio Gavardi di Asola, tutor to the Melzi family, got thirteen volumes of Leonardo's manuscripts, and on his return to Milan offered to return them to Dr. Melzi, who, astonished at his solicitude, gave him them, informing him at the same time that " there were many other drawings by Leonardo lying uncared for in the attics of his villa at Vaprio." '. ' Leonardo's Note-books,' p. 30, McCurdy.

[1] Dr. Thiis (p. 40).

in 1479, besides numerous others attributed to earlier and later dates, mostly now in public collections.

Of his lost pictures, all are accounted for after leaving his possession, even to his very earliest efforts. The Cartoon of *Adam and Eve*, drawn for the King of Portugal's tapestry, Vasari saw 'in the happy house of the glorious Octaviano de' Medici.' The *Monster on the Shield* he painted when a boy. It was sold to Ludovico Moro, Duke of Milan, according to Vasari, who also saw the *Medusa* in the collection of Duke Cosimo de' Medici, in whose inventory it was mentioned. The *Madonna with Flowers* was in the possession of Pope Clement VII. The *Neptune* was also seen by Vasari, and it then belonged to Messer Giovanni Gaddis. The *Birth of Christ* was delivered to the Emperor Maximilian I as a present from the Duke of Milan, and the master's 'anonymous biographer' describes it as one of the most beautiful things ever painted. The portraits of *Lucrecia Crivelli* and *Cecilia Gallerani* were in Milan as late as the eighteenth century.[1] The *Madonna with the Spindles* was seen and admired by Louis XII, as already recorded, and was at Pavia. The portrait of a child of Baldassare Turini and a Madonna painted in Rome were in that city long after the master left it, and were seen by Vasari in the house of one of Turini's descendants.[2] The *Leda and the Swan* and the *Pomona* were described by Lomazzo in detail, and he says they were at Fontainebleau, the property of Francis I.[3] The *Leda* was copied by Raphael in Florence between 1505–1506.[4]

Again, amongst his existing pictures, we have some of his earliest works. The *Annunciation*, painted in 1470,[5] when Leonardo was but eighteen years old, is now in the Louvre. His Cartoon and a study for the *Adoration of the Magi*, 1479–1481, are in the Uffizi,[6] and another study for the same subject is in Paris. The *St. Jerome*, of about the same date, 1480, is in the Vatican. The *Vièrge aux Rochers*, 1483, which Raphael and Perugino copied in Florence

[1] 'Leonardo,' by J. P. Richter (p. 43).

[2] Rosenberg (p. 140).

[3] 'Idea del Tempis della Pittura,' by Lomazzo, 1590 (pp. 6, 7).

[4] Müntz (vol. 2, p. 167).

[5] Thiis (p. 104). Rosenberg (p. 29).

[6] Of this Richardson makes the following note in his itinerary (p. 63): 'A fine *Adoration of the Magi*, unfinished. At a distance horses and horsemen; these my father has the studies of in several drawings (small ones), and one large one of a horse's skull, which is here just as in the drawing, only in oil, as this picture is printed. Probably this was a whim of Leonardo's, which he intended to clothe with flesh and skin; but a bare skull could have no meaning in his place.'

between 1504–1508,[1] and of which Leonardo, no doubt, drew his two versions at the outset (as he does not seem to have prepared any Cartoon), one of which he finished in Milan for the church of St. Francis, is now in the National Gallery; and the other, which he took with him to Cloux, where it was finished, is now in the Louvre. Next comes the *St. Anne* Cartoon, now in the Royal Academy, drawn, probably, in Milan, the possession of which made him, no doubt, so eager to get the transference of Filippino's commission from the Servite Monks, on his return to Florence in 1500, when he commenced the 'Cartoon' of the *St. Anne* seen by Fra Nuvolaria, which ultimately went to France, where it was painted with the assistance of Melzi, and now hangs in the Louvre. The alteration in this Cartoon to the Child Christ playing with the lamb may have been due to his having drawn it just before Easter, when the Paschal Lamb was so much in evidence in all the Easter religious services of the Church.[2] Then we have the two drawings for the Portrait of Isabella d'Este, 1499–1500, one of which he gave her and is now in the Uffizi, and the other he kept and took with him to France and is now in the Louvre. Finally we have the two versions of the *Mona Lisa* (seen by Fra Nuvolaria), one of which went to the Giocondos and the other accompanied Leonardo to France. The *St. John*, probably drawn in Milan by Leonardo, was painted at Cloux, where he was very much assisted in this picture by his Milanese pupil (Melzi), who worked 'exceedingly well.'

This forms the complete list of Leonardo's lost and extant pictures—that is to say, all those for which we have any contemporaneous evidence that he painted, or, to be more correct, that he commenced to paint them. From it we can see at once that the master himself never lost a single picture. Moreover, it must be remembered that before he returned to Florence in 1500, he had his faithful and devoted pupil and servant, Salai, in his employ; that his intimate friend, Melzi, joined him before he left Milan for Rome; and that both of these true and staunch friends jealously guarded every scrap of art that came from his hand, well knowing its value. Yet in spite of this, and in face of the record given above, we are told that Leonardo himself must have lost or destroyed these five pictures, for they were never traced beyond his own possession, and we are asked to believe it because his biographers cannot account for them

[1] M. Salomon Reinach in 'The Art Journal,' 1912 (p. 8).

[2] 'Why Leonardo deserted the Cartoon (the *St. Anne*) to engage on another version of the same subject (on which he was working in Florence in 1501) it would be hard to determine.' Mr. Bernhard Berenson in 'The Drawings of the Florentine Masters' (vol. 1, p. 158).

in any other way. But to acquiesce in such a conclusion one should be endowed with a credulity to be found nowhere outside the realms of Utopia.

No, Leonardo never lost these five pictures. The two portraits seen by Fra Nuvolaria were the two versions of the *Mona Lisa;* one of which went to the sitter's husband, Francesco del Giocondo, before 1506, and remained in his possession until his death in 1528, when the turbulent times had already set in for Florence which ended in the famous siege in 1530. Is it surprising that in the terrible confusion and distraction of such a catastrophe, the unfinished *Mona Lisa* portrait should have been completely lost sight of and have passed for many years into oblivion? When discovered, it may naturally have been treated as a copy, since Vasari, the first writer on the subject, presumed there was but the one version, the finished —though he described it as unfinished from what he had heard in Florence—picture that had gone into the collection of Francis I. Whereas the *Mona Lisa* that did go into the King's collection was the other unfinished version that had remained on with the master, with the unfinished *St. Anne*, and they were both finished at Cloux. The two pictures of ' two of our ladies ' referred to in Leonardo's draft letters in 1511, and described by him as ' of different sizes,' were far more likely to have been these two unfinished pictures, than two finished paintings lost later by Leonardo, who, we have seen, never lost a picture. The ' Florentine Lady ' shown to the Cardinal of Aragon at Cloux must have been this second *Mona Lisa*, finished, and shown with the all but finished *St. Anne*, and the *St. John*, that had been also painted here at Cloux, all three of which passed later into the collection of Francis I and are now in the Louvre. This is quite a simple and probable solution of the mystery surrounding the supposed five lost pictures.

In conclusion, I cannot help referring to the strange fact that most of Leonardo's biographers have treated so cavalierly and indifferently the most important contemporary evidence we have in the life of the master, to wit: the Nuvolaria letters; the Raphael study from the *Mona Lisa;* the famous interview at Cloux; and the very significant passage in his will; while they have nearly all seized, with journalistic alacrity, upon the illusive and sensational item of the price supposed to have been paid by Francis I for the *Mona Lisa* now in the Louvre.

I think, however, I may fairly claim to have shown: that on the evidence of Fra Nuvolaria two *Mona Lisas* could have been commenced by Leonardo in Florence in 1501, and that this was so is proved by the contingent circumstances and evidence I have pro-

duced; that the drawing, or study, made in 1505 by Raphael in Florence was *not made* from the one and only accredited *Mona Lisa* now in the Louvre; that the ' Florentine Lady ' shown by Leonardo himself at Cloux can have been no other portrait than the *Mona Lisa* now in the Louvre; that according to his will, made a few days before his death, he left portrait*s* and that there is no record, private or public, that he had any other portraits to leave beyond those of Madonna Lisa and Isabella d'Este, both now in the Louvre. That the Isleworth *Mona Lisa* is the genuine work of Leonardo da Vinci I leave the picture itself to prove on its own merits; while I suggest that in point of artistic excellence it is even greater than the Louvre masterpiece, which has generally been described as the greatest portrait in the world. Owing to the war, and thanks to the kindly courtesy of the Directors of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Isleworth masterpiece is now in their Gallery in Boston, U.S.A., out of harm's way and in safe keeping, beyond the reach of either cannon-belching culture, the false philosophy of force, or the cardinal virtue of aggression.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

M. Salomon Reinach in the ' Revue Archéologique,' November-December, 1913, on the return of the *Mona Lisa* to the Louvre, wrote :—

' L'acquisition de la " Joconde."

' Peruggia ayant pretendu d'abord qu'il avait volé la Joconde pour reparer le dommage causé a son pays par Napoleon, les journalistes ont rappelé a l'envi que ce tableau avait été acquis par François 1er au prix de douze mille francs de notre monnaie. Cette assertion n'est fondée que sur un on-dit recueilli par le Pére Dan (1642). En réalité, la question reste tout à fait obscure. D'abord, il n'est pas prouvé que lorsque le Cardinal D'Aragon rendit visite à Leonard au Château de Cloux, en 1517, le portrait de femme que le peintre lui fit voir, " executé à la demande de Julien de Medici " fut la Joconde. Si cela etait certain, il faudrait en conclure, comme l'a dit M. Seymour de Ricci :[1] 1° que Leonard, après avoir peint les maitresses de Ludovic de More a portraicturé une favorite du Grand-duc de Toscane ; 2° que le portrait inachevé, laissé aux mains de Leonard par le Mari du Modèle, lui fut acheté par le Roi en France, ou qu'il fut acquis de son heritier Melzi, ou qu'il fut confisqué " en vertu de ces nombreux droits d'aubaine qui permittaient aux rois de France de s'approprier les biens des étrangers décédés sur leur territoire " Tout cela est egalement douteux ; tant qu'il ne sera pas etabli que la Joconde fut transportée par Leonardo en France, on pourra croire que François 1er la fit acheter a Florence, peut-être apres la mort de Fra Giocondo, a cause de la celebrité de ce portrait dont temoignent assez, quoique postérieurs d'un demi-siecle, les dires de Vasari.

' S. R.'

APPENDIX II

Account written by Antonio di Beatis of the interview between Leonardo and the Cardinal of Aragon at Cloux and quoted by Uzielli in his ' Richerché intorno a Leonardo da Vinci,' Vol. 2, p. 460.

'Alli 10 de Ottobre (1516)[2] da Tursa . . . se andò ad Amboys. . . . In uno de li borghi el Signore (cioè il Cardinal d'Aragona) con noi altri andò ad vedere Messer Lunardo Vinci florentino vecchio de più de Lxx (?) anni pietore in la età nostra excelentissimo quale mostro ad sua S. Illma (the Cardinal) tre quatri. Uno di certa

[1] ' Gil Blas,' 1er Janvier, 1914.

[2] This date is corrected to 1517 in the second edition of Uzielli's *Richerché intorno a Leonardo da Vinci,* p. xx., footnote 1. But only one volume of this edition was issued.

donna florentina, facto di naturale ad istantia del quondam Magnifico Juliano de Medici. L'altro di San Joanne Baptista giovane et uno de la Madonna et del figliolo che stan posti in gremmo di Sancta Anna, tucti perfectissimi. Ben vero che da lui per esserli venuta certa paralesi nella dextra non se ne può exspectare più cosa buona, ha ben facto un creato Milanese che lavora assai bene, et benche il predecto Messer Lunardo non possa colorire con quella dulcezza che solea pur serve ad fare disegni et insignare ad altri,' etc.

APPENDIX III

Extracts from an Article in 'Les Arts,' January, 1914, contributed by M. André-Charles Coppier, in which he tries to prove that Leonardo could not have painted the portrait of Madonna Lisa Giocondo :—

'Les belles dames florentines au temps de Léonard s'épilaient les sourcils, avec une pince spéciale qu'on appelait le "Pelatoio," pour ressembler aux déesses antiques qu'on découvrait alors un peu partout en Italie et dont c'était "la Renaissance." . . .

'C'est ce qui frappa tout d'abord le commandeur Cassiano Del Pozzo quand il vit, en 1625, le tableau qu'on commençait seulement à appeler "la Gioconda," d'après le dire de Vasari, et où il observa *"qu'à cette dame, d'ailleurs belle,* IL MANQUAIT LES SOURCILS." Aussi convient-il de prendre tout de suite en flagrant délit d'inexacte faconde, ce Giorgio Vasari, l'inventeur de la légende de *"Mona Lisa,"* QUI N'AVAIT JAMAIS VU LE TABLEAU lorsqu'il se permit de le décrire de la sorte, en ce qui concerne les sourcils en particulier. *"Les sourcils, leur insertion dans la chair,* dit-il, *leur épaisseur plus ou moins prononcée, leur courbure suivant les pores de la peau, ne pourraient être rendus d'une manière plus naturelle!"*

'Quelle acuité d'observation ! quelle documentation rigoureuse ! dirions-nous en lisant ce couplet, si l'on n'avait la preuve que Vasari n'est jamais venu en France, qu'il n'avait donc jamais vu le chef-d'oeuvre de Léonard apporté à Amboise par celui-ci dès le milieu de 1516 ! Il n'avait pu le voir en Italie, car Vasari est né en 1512, la même année, d'ailleurs, que ce tableau ; à moins qu'à l'âge de quatre ans il n'ait déjà couché par écrit ces notes mémorables ! . . .

'. . . Mais lorsque le gonfalonnier de Florence "il magnifico Giuliano di Medici" lui commanda *au plus tôt la fin de 1512* une figure de femme, Léonard prit-il soin d'observer judicieusement les modes de son temps, en accentuant le *caractère sculptural* de sa figure par l'absence de cils et de sourcils. . . .

'. . . Cette mode était si bien établie, qu'on peut voir, rien qu'au Musée du Louvre, une vingtaine de tableaux de divers maîtres de l'Ombrie, ou de Florence, où la *suppression des sourcils semble proportionnée a la qualité plus ou moins divine des personnages.* . . .

'. . . Nous y revoyons maintenant la Joconde qui n'eut jamais ni cils ni sourcils et qui gagnerait beaucoup à être regardée seulement comme une peinture, comme le chef-d'oeuvre de la Renaissance et à être enfin débarrassée de toute cette légende par hyperboles, qui se développa sous le second Empire sous l'impulsion de Théophile Gautier, de G. Sand et d'Arsène Houssaye, sur le thème inadmissible de Vasari qui l'avait inventé de toutes pièces. Car nous n'avons au sujet de ce tableau célèbre *qu'une seule déclaration contemporaine,* MAIS CAPITALE, *parce qu'elle émane directement du Vinci lui-même,* qui le présentant au Cardinal d'Aragon, lui assura QU'IL L'AVAIT ÉXÉCUTÉ SUR LES INSTANCES DE JULIEN DE MÉDICIS.

' . . . ce prince n'avait pas toujours eu cette fortune enviable d'être le maître de la cité de Florence, puis ensuite le frère d'un pape et le généralissime de ses armées.

' Ce successeur du Valentinois César Borgia, " de France "—comme il aimait à se dénommer quand il entra dans Milan à la suite de Louis XII—ce successeur indirect, qui le remplaçait à la fois comme condottiere papal et comme protecteur de Léonard de Vinci, avait été exilé de Florence en 1494 avec ses frères, Pierre II qui régnait alors, et Jean, le futur pape Léon X, ses aînés. Il s'était mis, pour vivre, au service des divers princes italiens, qui changèrent de parti durant les guerres de la Renaissance comme leurs faucons changeaient de main et de chaperon armorié au gré d'événements plus imprévus encore.

' Le plus jeune des Médicis était donc hors d'état de prendre Léonard à son service, ni même de lui commander une oeuvre d'art quelconque, avant le mois de septembre 1512, où il put enfin rentrer à Florence en croupe d' " Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi," à la tête des troupes espagnoles pour préparer l'entrée solennelle du cardinal, son frère, héritier de Pierre, mort en exil, lequel ne parut que le 14 septembre avec un millier de lances, escorté de Julien et de Jules de Médecis, leur cousin, le futur pape Clément VII. Ils forcèrent, le 16 septembre, le gonfalonnier Ridolfi à démissionner, et Julien fut nommé chef de la république de Florence.

' Rentrés en possession de leur puissance et de leurs biens confisqués en 1494, les Médicis reprirent tout de suite à Florence la tradition de leur illustre père, Laurent le Magnifique, et Julien s'attacha aussitôt Léonard. Faut-il admettre que durant les quelques mois qu'il demeura dans Florence après cette date mémorable, le Vinci ait demandé a " un gentilhomme ferrarois, appelé François Jocondo, ami intime dudit Léonard, lequel l'ayant prié de lui permettre de faire le portrait de sa femme, il lui accorda "? (si l'on s'en rapportait à la légende du Père Dan, inspirée de Vasari, publiée en 1642 dans son *Trésor des merveilles du château de Fontainebleau*) ; faut-il admettre que l'artiste se soit servi de ce modèle pour peindre le tableau qu'il avait promis au prince Julien?

' Cette Mona Lisa, dont Vasari parle pour la première fois en 1550, et que Léonard n'a jamais nommée, pas même au roi François Ier qui acheta le tableau, cette Mona Lisa n'était pas une FLORENTINE, mais une NAPOLITAINE, de la famille Gherardini, qui avait épousé en 1495 l'un des douze " Buonomini " de Florence " Francesco di Bartolomeo, di Zanobi, del Giocondo," déjà veuf à trente-cinq ans, pour la deuxième fois. Elle avait eu deux enfants et pour peu qu'on lui accorde dix-huit ans à l'époque de son mariage elle avait donc au moins trente-cinq ans à la fin de 1512 ; encore faudrait-il admettre que Julien de Médicis, en entrant à Florence, ait eu le coup de foudre, pour s'empresser de demander à Léonard d'immortaliser les traits de cette dame en peu marquée ! . . .

' . . . Mais le 11 mars, 1513, le Cardinal Giovanni, ayant été élu pape, sous le nom de Léon X (quoique diacre encore), s'empressait d'appeler auprès de lui son jeune frère. " Giuliano !" lui écrivait-il ! " Jouissons de la papauté puisque Dieu nous l'a octroyée " ; puis il lui offrait la charge de généralissime des armées pontificales.

' Julien abandonnait presque aussitôt Florence ; mais, avec son exaspérante lenteur en toutes choses, ce n'est que le 24 septembre, 1513, que Léonard note son départ pour Rome avec toute sa maison " Giovanni, Francesco Melzi, Salaï, Lorenzo et le Fanfoia." Où aurait-il pris le temps de consacrer quatre années à cette peinture, si l'on en croyait ce grand hâbleur de Vasari? Ce n'est pas à partir de cette époque, car il n'aurait plus eu son modèle et, un an après, il était à Parme, puis en Sicile et de nouveau à Rome, où il note que : le 9 de janvier, 1515, " il magnifico Giuliano di Medici " partait de Rome, à l'aurore, pour aller en

Savoie épouser la " Moglia "; le même jour qu'arrivait la nouvelle de la mort de Louis XII, autre protecteur du Vinci. . . .

' . . . C'est là (Cloux) que Léonard reçut, le 10 octobre de cette année (1516) la visite du Cardinal d'Aragon, fils naturel du roi de Naples, accompagné de son secrétaire, Antonio di Béatis d'Amalfi, lequel note aussitôt, en ces termes, les détails de cette entrevue, qu'il jugeait mémorable : " Il montra à notre illustrissime cardinal trois ' quadri,' l'un de la Vierge avec Sainte Anne, un Saint Jean-Baptiste et *l'un, d'une certaine dame* FLORENTINE, *fait sur les instances du magnifique feu Julien de Médicis.*" . . .

' . . . Il est donc bien établi que Léonard n'a pu consacrer quatre années à cette oeuvre, à partir du jour où Julien la lui commanda, et voici qu'une deuxième partie de la légende de Vasari s'écroule à son tour. . . .

' . . . Il faut ensuite observer que Léonard n'a pas pu peindre la Ginevra d'Amerigo Benci, comme Vasari l'affirme à tort. Il y avait à cela une impossibilité matérielle, car cette Ginevra, née en 1457, mourut en 1473, alors que Léonard n'avait encore produit aucune peinture, et près de trente années avant qu'il entreprit le tableau commandé par Julien de Medicis, la soi-disant *Joconde,* que Vasari place chronologiquement tout de suite après ce portrait de Ginevra qui lui fit abandonner la Sainte Anne, du maître-autel de l'Annunziata (vers 1504), . . .

' . . . On retrouve dans la Sainte Anne, dans le Saint Jean du Cénacole, dans la Joconde et le Saint Jean, du Louvre, la même forme et la même exécution sculpturale du nez, la même sinuosité asymétrique du menton, sur le bord extérieur du visage, la même dépression médiane du front, les mêmes lèvres en arc, les mêmes pommettes un peu saillantes, sous des paupières inférieures très assombries par le modelé, et enfin le même *sinus naso-labial entourant* la commissure des lèvres. C'est cette parenté étroite de formes, de lignes et de plans qui est le plus évident indice qu'on ne se trouvre pas devant la Joconde, en présence d'un portrait, et qu'il faut y voir une sorte d'entité féminine, le prototype vincien dans sa plus parfaite réalisation. . . .

' . . . Ce n'est donc pas MONA LISA qui vient de rentrer au musée du Louvre, mais l'idéale conception du plus grand maître de la Renaissance, la soeur plus parfaite de la Sainte Anne et des deux Saint Jean, la moderne *Diane aux sourcils blancs* qu'un Erostrate, bien diminué, a failli détruire récemment en la promenant vingt-cinq mois dans des taudis de basse pègre.

' (Signed) ANDRÉ-CHARLES COPPIER.'

APPENDIX IV

Extracts from article by M. A. Gruyer in ' La Gazette des Beaux-Arts,' August, 1887 :—

' Le *Saint Jean-Baptiste,* la *Sainte Anne* et la *Joconde* . . . ces trois tableaux sont du même art, du même esprit, du même style, et, à quelques années près, du même temps ; mais ils ont défié jusqu'ici toute chronologie positive. On peut donc aller de l'un à l'autre indifféremment. . . .

' Voilà quatre siècles bientôt que Mona Lisa fait perdre la tête à tous ceux qui parlent d'elle, après l'avoir longtemps regardée. On a vu tour à tour en elle la plus délicieuse et la plus perfide des femmes. . . . Le portrait de Mona Lisa est le plus précieux des dons, que François 1er ait fait à la galerie du Louvre. Depuis le moment où il fut peint jusquà nos jours, on peut le suivre, sans le

perdre de vue un seul instant. Leonard l'exécute de 1500 à 1504, et c'est lui même qui l'achète, a Florence, moyennant 4,000 écus d'or (environ 45,000 frs.) pour le compte du roi de France. Il entre dans le *Cabinet doré* de Fontainebleau, où le père Dan le trouve encore en 1642. Louis XIV le transporte à Versailles, où Bailly le signale dans la " Petite Galerie du Roy " en 1709. La Révolution le fait venir à Paris et le place au Musée National. De nos jours, enfin, il prend, dans le Salon Carrè, la place qu'il occupe aujourd'hui.' (p. 107.)

APPENDIX V

Extracts from Michelet's ' History of France,' in which he treats of the *Mona Lisa,* etc.

' Entrez au Musée du Louvre, dans la grande galerie, à gauche vous avez l'ancien monde, le nouveau à droite. D'un côté, les défaillantes figures du frère Angelico de Fiesole, restées aux pieds de la Vièrge du moyen âge; leurs regards malades et mourants semblent pourtant chercher, vouloir. En face de ce vieux mysticisme, brille dans les peintures de Vinci, le génie de la Renaissance, en sa plus âpre inquiétude, et son plus perçant aiguillon. Entre ces choses contemporaines, il y a plus d'un millier d'années.

' Bacchus, Saint Jean et la Joconde, dirigent leurs regards vers vous; vous êtes fascinés et troublés, un infini agit sur vous par un étrange magnétisme. Art, nature, génie de mystère et de découverte, maître des profondeurs du monde, de l'abime inconnu des âges, parlez, que voulez-vous de moi? Cet toile m'attire m'appelle, m'envahit, m'absorbe; je vais à elle malgré moi comme l'oiseau va au serpent.

' Bacchus ou Saint Jean, n'importe, c'est le meme personnage a deux moments differents.

' . . . Une étrange île d'Alcine est dans les yeux de Joconde, gracieux et souriant fantôme. Vous la croyiez attentive aux récits légers de Boccace. Prenez garde. Vinci lui-meme, le grand maître de l'illusion, fut pris à son piége; longues années il resta là sans pouvoir sortir jamais de ce labyrinthe mobile, fluide et changeant, qu'il a peint au fond du dangereux tableau.'—' Histoire de France,' par Jules Michelet, Paris, 1879, Vol. IX, pp. 88-90.

APPENDIX VI

Extract from M. Salomon Reinach's article in ' Le Bulletin des Musées de France,' 1909, p. 21 :—

' En dehors de son mariage (1495) nous ne connaissons, par sa date, qu'un incident de la vie de Mona Lisa : cet incident est un deuil. Un archiviste a communiqué a Müntz un extrait du *Libro dei Morti* de Florence, d'où il ressort qu'au 1er Juin, 1499, une petite fille (fanciulla) de Francesco del Giocondo fut enterrée a Sainte-Marie-Nouvelle. . . . Mona Lisa est en deuil. Son deuil se marque d'abord à son costume, qui est sombre, et en voile noir qu'elle porte sur la tête. Théophile Gautier parle avec raison de " cette tête baignée de demi-teintes crépusculaires, enveloppée de crêpes transparents." Mais il y a quelque chose de plus significatif que la couleur des êtoffes, olivâtre ou brune : c'est l'absence complète de bijoux.'

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